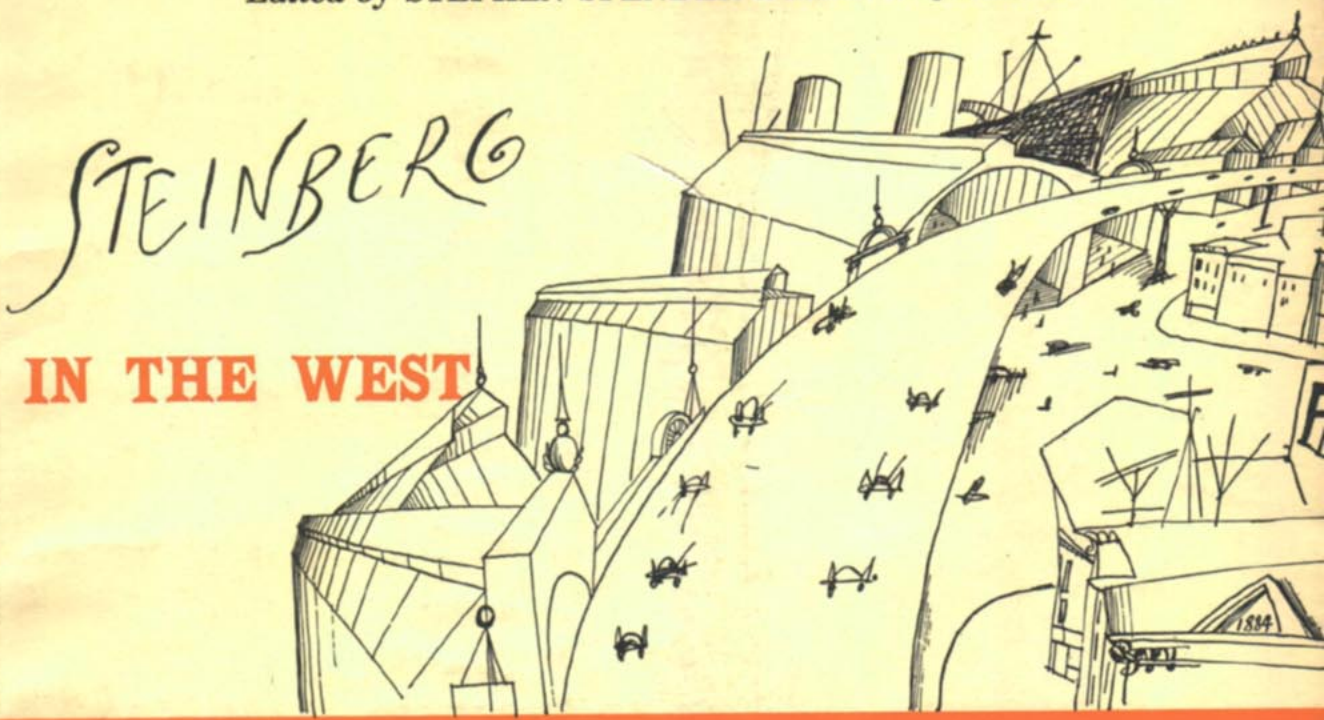
Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY



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STEINBERG IN THE WEST	3	*Stephen Spender*
THE GENERAL'S GENERALS	10	*Brian Crozier*
ON THE BRIDGE	17	*Colin Wilson*
THE SPECTRE OF REVISIONISM	24	*R. H. S. Crossman*
AUSCHWITZ	29	*Constantine FitzGibbon*
BLACK, WHITE AND THE BLUES	40	*Kenneth Allsop*
POETRY		
ONE OF THOSE HOT DAYS	16	*Alan Ross*
HISTORY	23	*Peter Levi, S.J.*
THE WORDS OF THE WORLD	45	*Frank Kermode*
NOTES AND TOPICS		
A WREATH FOR LAWRENCE?	51	*Richard Aldington*
DISAGREEING ON FUNDAMENTALS	54	*Irving Kristol*
THE REICHSTAG FIRE	58	*John Mander*
OUT OF AFRICA	61	*Ezekiel Mphahlele*
THEATRE		
THE FULLY CONSIDERED PAGE	64	*Nigel Dennis*
THE CONNECTION	67	*Richard Wollheim*
BOOKS		
PROUST AND SELF-PARODY	69	*Stuart Hampshire*
CRITIQUE OF FREUD	73	*Philip Toynbee*
END OF A DEMAGOGUE	76	*Alastair Buchan*
TENNYSON, NEW AND NONDESCRIPT	80	*Geoffrey Grigson*
LETTERS	82	
AUTHORS	88	

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STEINBERG IN THE WEST

IMAGINE *yourself parachuted at random on to this planet. If you were to land in the Brazilian jungle, the Australian desert, or even remote parts of the Yorkshire moors—there would, you suppose, be a terrifying emptiness of nature. The first person you met might well be a Native—a pigmy, an aborigine, or a yokel. But if you were to land in America—impossible not to think that you would see a filling station, a comfort station, or a hot-dog stand. The first person you met would be—an American. If it were an American Indian, he would probably resemble that one dancing in a war-dance beloved of D. H. Lawrence whom I saw once in Taos. When I asked him where he got his feathered head-dress, he replied: "At a drug-store on my way through Oklahoma."*

America is notoriously the country most covered with the same labels, rushed over by the same people driving the same automobiles. Foreigners are so conscious of this that they probably think of the whole country as being all the same, much as they certainly think there is only one American accent. The fact is that America has five climates, a Western and a Southern landscape, looking quite different from the Eastern seaboard—to mention only the most obvious contrasts.

One of the things that Steinberg has seized on is the absurdity of the trade-marked and standardised incongruous ubiquitousness of some Americans whose style is audaciously impervious to their natural settings. His most striking observation is of a civilisation which invades the landscape, setting up its drug-stores and markets and movies everywhere like hieroglyphics scratched on to paper by Steinberg's own pen. The America he portrays has a great deal in common with activist art. The painter takes any surface available—a continent will do—and on any material, steel and concrete, wood and billboard, he "expresses" himself. The only condition of such an art is that it should be absolutely new and dynamic, and capable of perpetually renewing itself. So long as these conditions are fulfilled the incongruities are assertions of the strangest civilising genius the world has ever seen: a stop-gap genius, a genius for covering over as it were the deepest, oldest natural abysms in the world with advertisements. This year's automobiles and cans and bottles—more replaceable than things like Gothic cathedrals—answer the terrors of the primeval with the assertion of an all-pervasive ever-renewable To-day. The hoardings are not meant to last. But there will be new paper, with a brighter pattern, to paste over the cracks to-morrow. And some of the designs are beautiful.

THESE REMARKS INTRODUCE A NUMBER OF NEW DRAWINGS BY SAUL STEINBERG WHICH HE HAS BEEN KIND ENOUGH TO SEND US, AND WHICH ARE HERE PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

STEINBERG'S *drawings often give us a sense of exhilarated appreciation of the very objects he satirises. A fly-over, bearing automobiles like cockroaches and scarabs on its caterpillar back, curves above a road on one side of which there are a Methodist chapel and houses dated 1884, on the other, wharves, warehouses, and, beyond these, the funnels of a ship. We are in the presence of the American steel-and-concrete perpetual metamorphosis.*

But his drawings of skyscrapers and hotels suggest another America which contradicts this. This skyscraper with intaglio ornaments embossed in lines beside its honeycomb windows might survive as long as the pyramids. There is something ancient and unfamiliar about its situation among the Spanish-style San Francisco homes which is as strange as Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment. It is a monument

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to the incongruity of the old, set amid the defiant incongruities of the Modern, like those hotels in New York—the Gladstone and the Chelsea—whose cultivated out-datedness strikes the note of a sustained novelty—Gertrude Stein's "continuous present."

All civilisations express the conquest of nature, and the greatest triumph of a culture is when the victory is so complete that it can afford to let nature have back a piece of framed-in wilderness, a National Park or sacred mountain. The form which European and Asian conquest takes is fortified strong-posts which let down shafts in depth into time. The lone centennial village in the Andalusian mountains, sung by Lorca, represents the penetration into the historic past, the isolation in space, of European civilisation. American civilisation conquers nature not through time but through its spread-out army of advertisements and filling-stations over all its space. The idea is to conquer loneliness: the Motel, the Palmist's Hut, and the Wedding Chapel at the edge of the Canyon, the automobiles, and, of course, the tourists, everywhere. In a way the conquest seems much more complete than in Europe. Wild life and ghosts can stalk round our fortifications. In America there is a feeling that all the ghosts have been laid by the coca-cola advertisements, and that the primitive wilderness has been emasculated and put on show, enclosed between inverted commas which consist of signs on the highroad "100 Miles to Natural Bridge" or the wooden palisades round an Indian Reserve.

All the same, nature fights back subtly with armies of ants, with tickling heat, the further South and West you get. Steinberg suggests that the Motel has a far more ambiguous relationship to local scenery than Main Street, or, indeed, most of the architecture. Motels—particularly in the West and South-west, and on the fringes of the deserts—tend to take on the exotic colouring of the local scenery. There are palm courts, pueblos, ranches, castles, huts. Like fauna, the Motel goes in for camouflage. This suggests that if the next mutation of American culture were to produce a Motel civilisation it would have as much diversity of local colouring as, say, the English villages which are so different—those in the Cotswolds from those in Yorkshire or Suffolk. Indeed, some Steinberg drawings suggest a wholesale flooding back of the tide of nature into American life through those exposed gaps which are the Motels. Colonial Court, Flamingo, and Magnolia let in the electric tide of fern and tendril and palm which are deeply related to the antennæ of moths and beetles. Steinberg seems to suggest that there are possibilities of the unconsidered Southern and Western climates taking revenge on the Atlantic Eastern seaboard puritan gales, and there being, through the treacherous agency of the Motels, a reversion to exotic nature. On the outskirts of Las Vegas and along the coast of Monterey, the automobiles begin to develop into enormous insects with waving flippers, their headlamps become mothy eyes, their wheels claws. One is filled with a luminous anxiety as to what is happening to the souls of the drivers of these machines transformed into creepy-crawlies.

We are all hypnotised by this America because it is the image of what is happening to our civilisation. Industrialism offers us a world in which metamorphosis succeeds metamorphosis of material things taming nature by changing the face of the earth. It is a world of perpetual self-renewal by the absolutely modern, acknowledging no debts to the past and no need to fit its bursting ubiquitous forms into the surrounding scenery which it tramples down to suit its purposes. Perhaps it offers the only possible shape of a future in which changes in technique superseding each other with ever greater rapidity, make the attempt to build or create anything that will endure seem vain. Even the beautiful will have to abandon the attempt to become history, be content, through "improved communications" with geographical conquest. However, nature, as Steinberg shows, is capable of working come-backs.

Perhaps it would be portentous to say that Steinberg portrays existential man in his most recent setting. But his subject is certainly the gulf between the American and the Universe; and this gulf is the Absurd. It is not the absurdity which Pascal contemplated when he thought of the infinite indifference to Man of the spaces between the stars. It is the gulf which the tourist sees when, having parked his car at the edge of the Grand Canyon, between the Palmist's Hut and the Motel, he peers down into the depths of a nature that seems encircled and tamed, and thinks that it is all America, that he has nothing to fear.

S. S.

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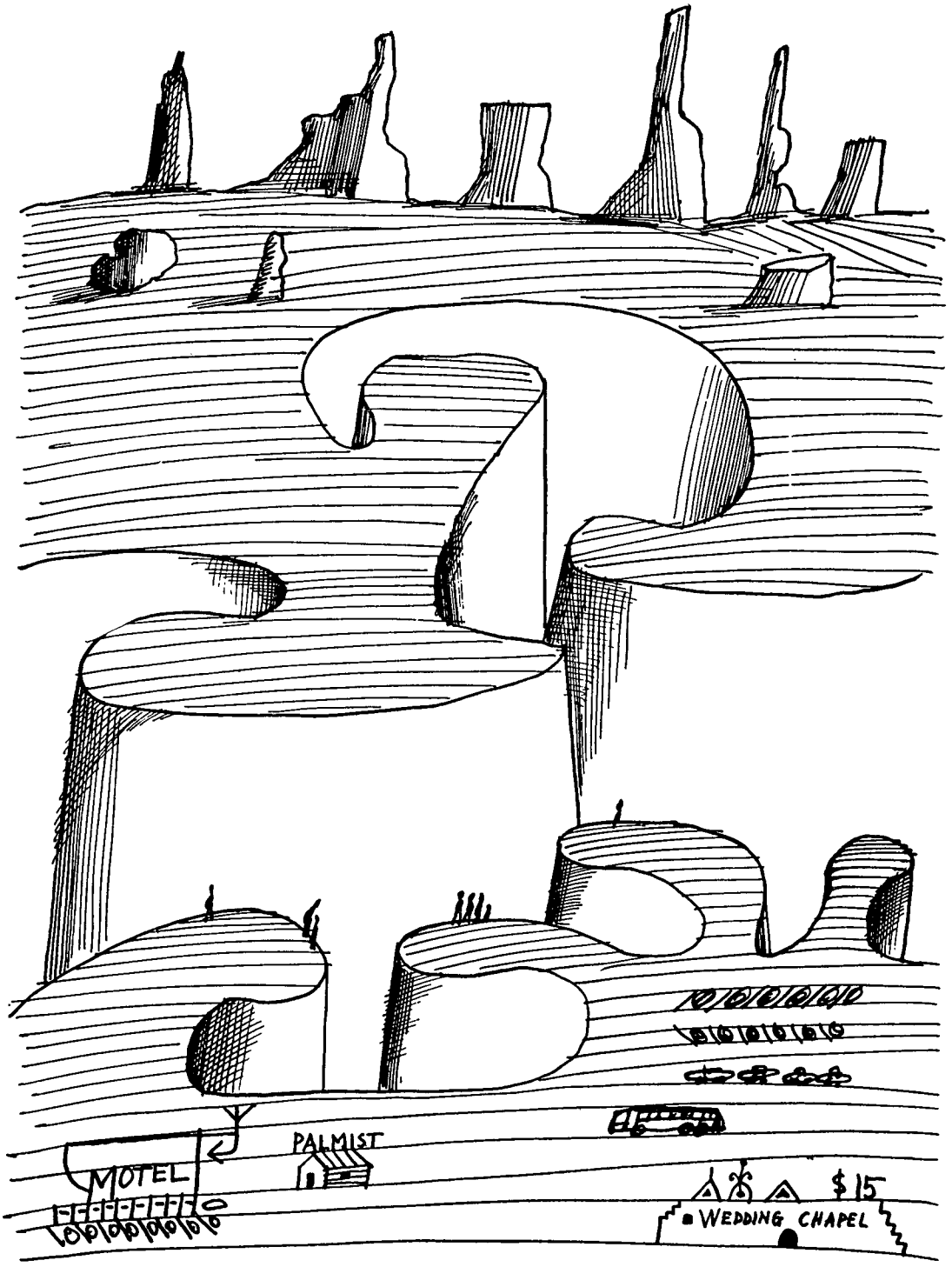

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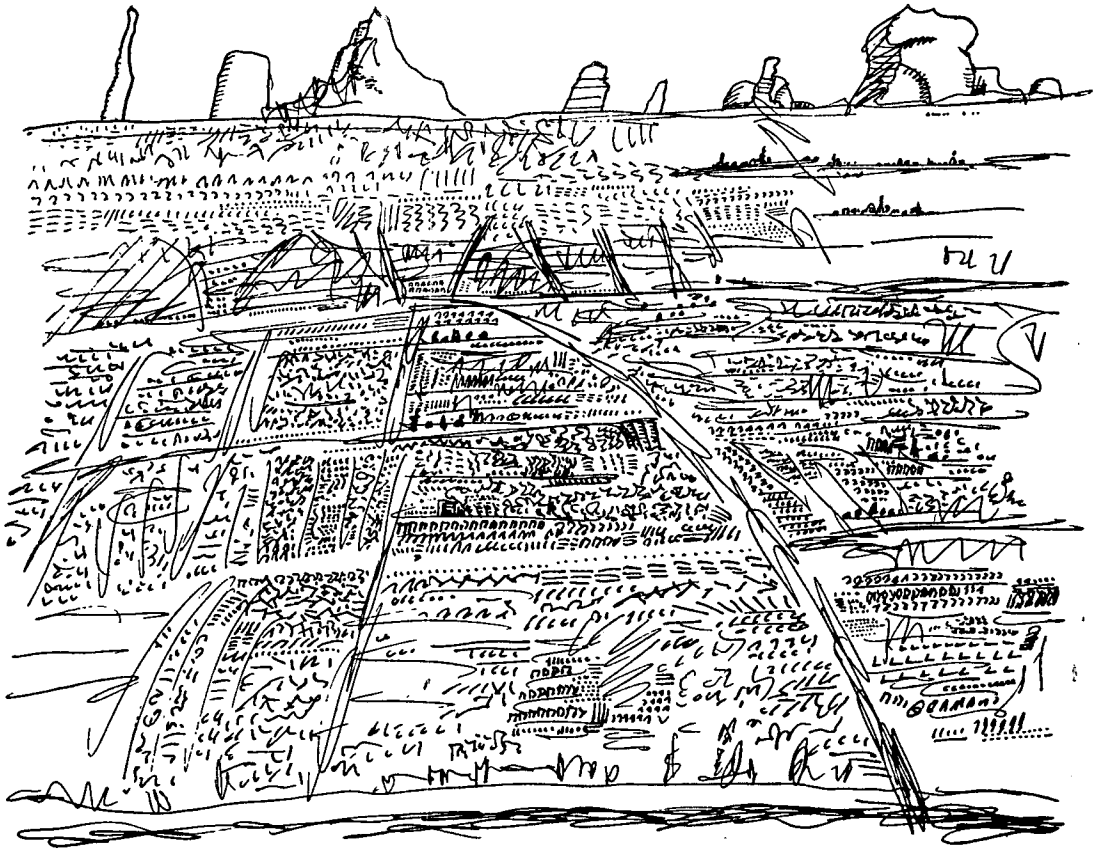

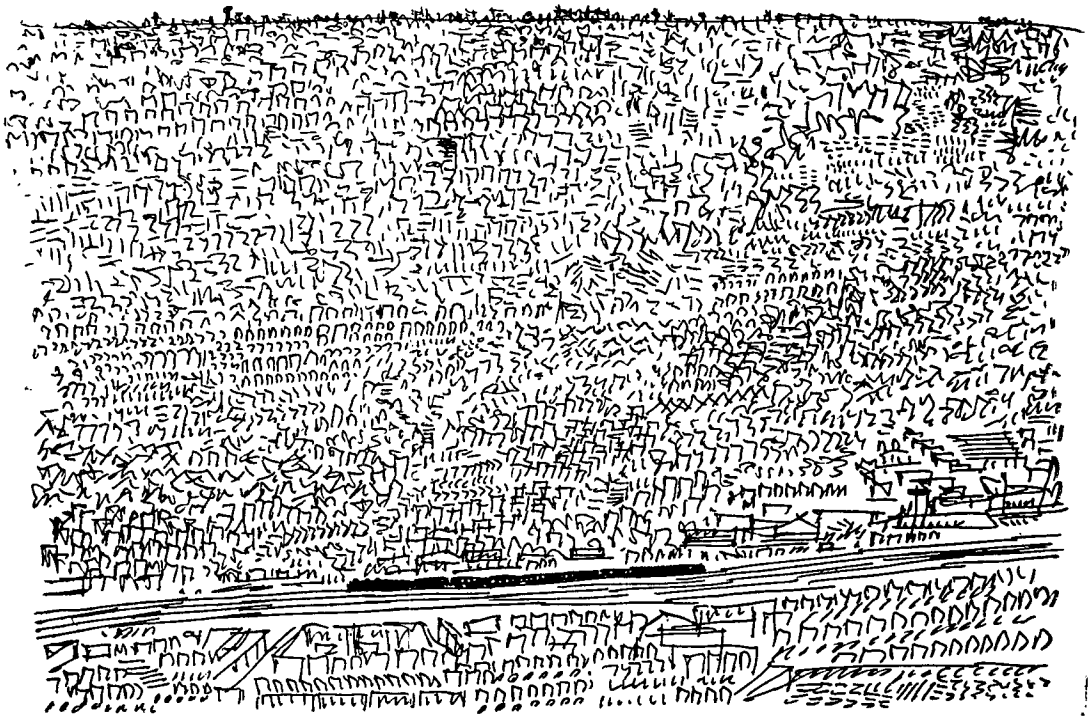

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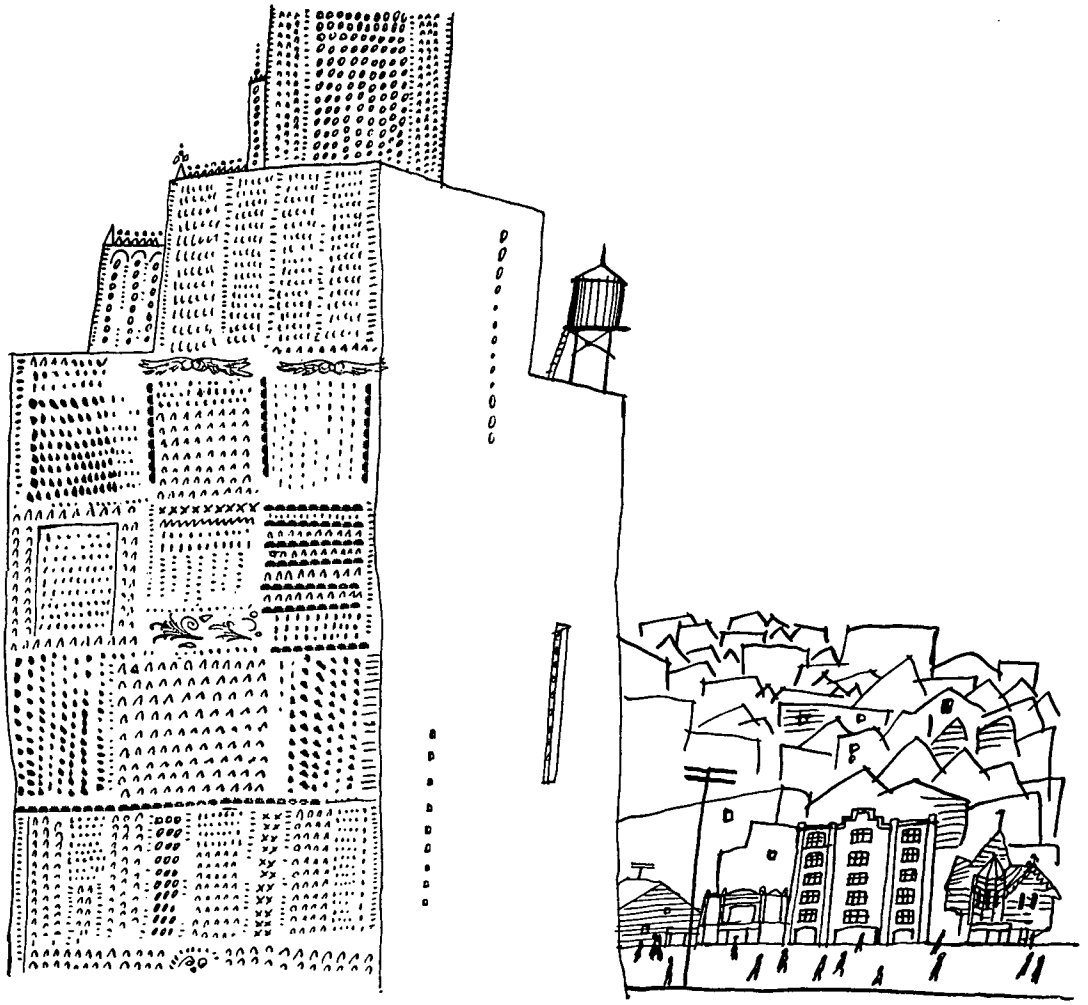

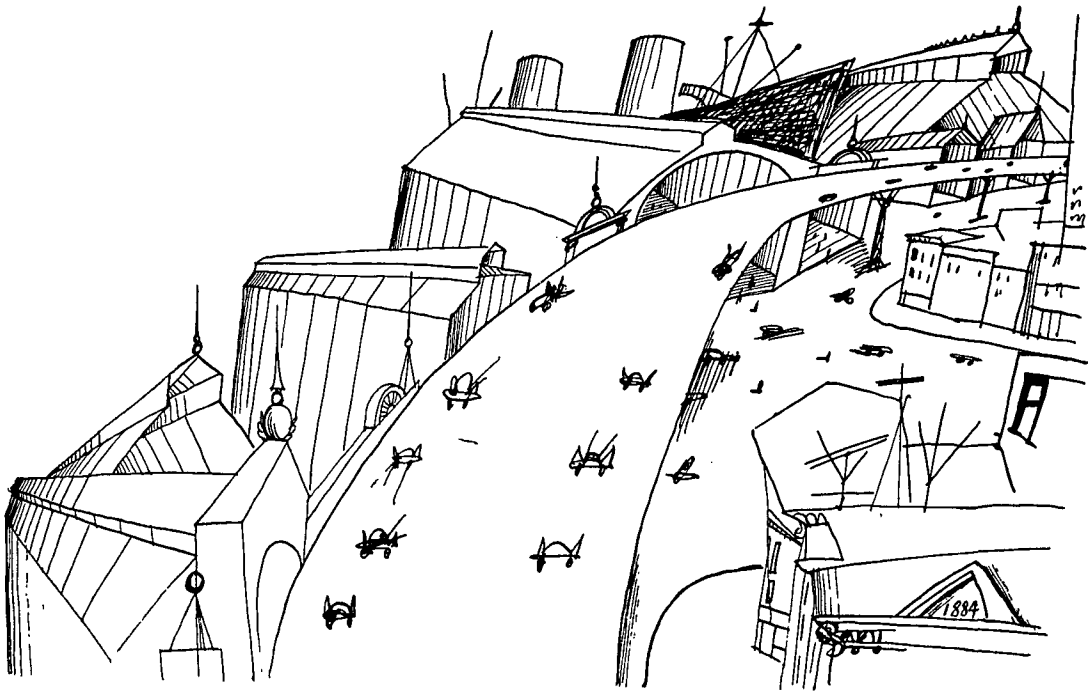

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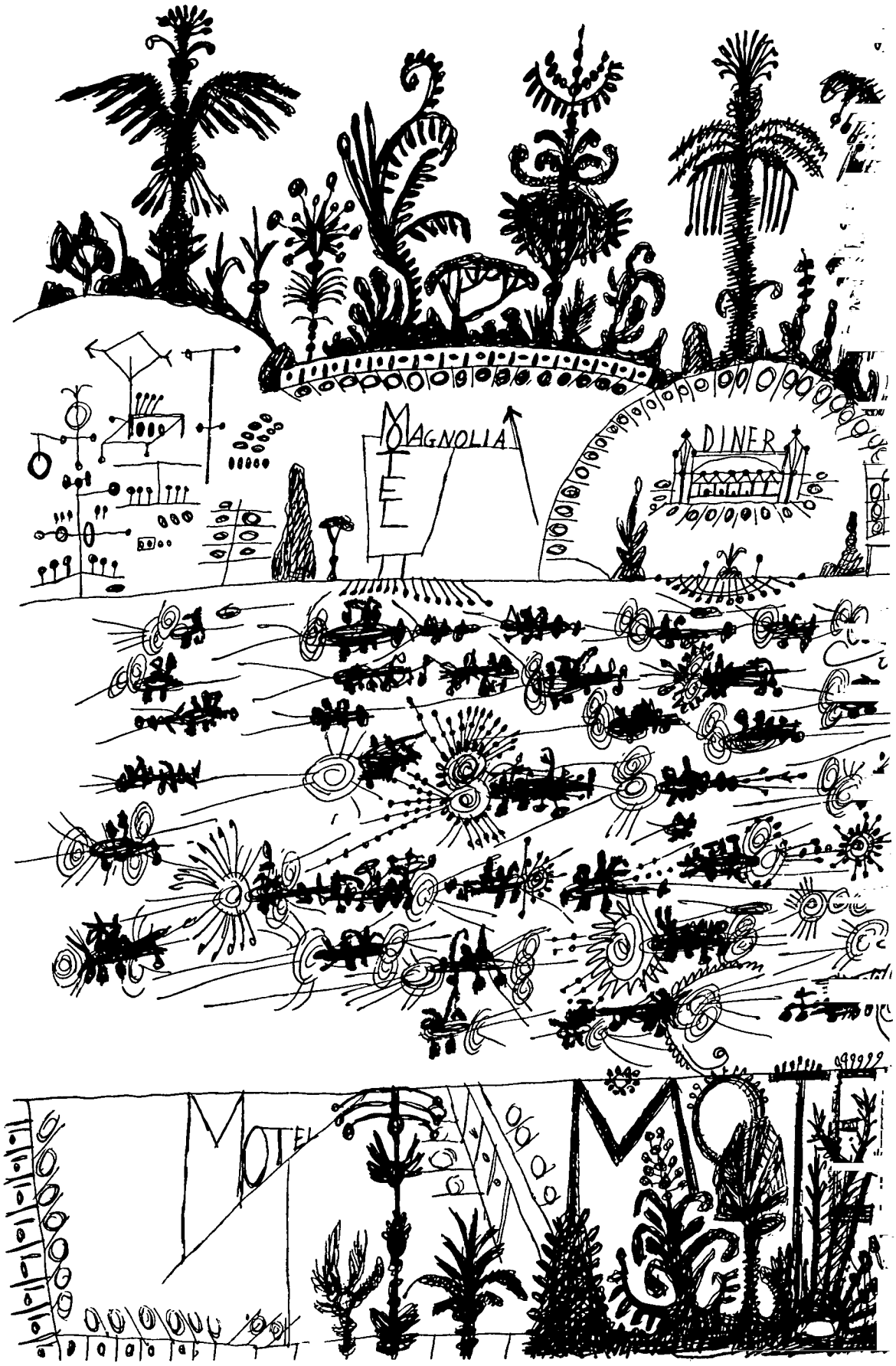

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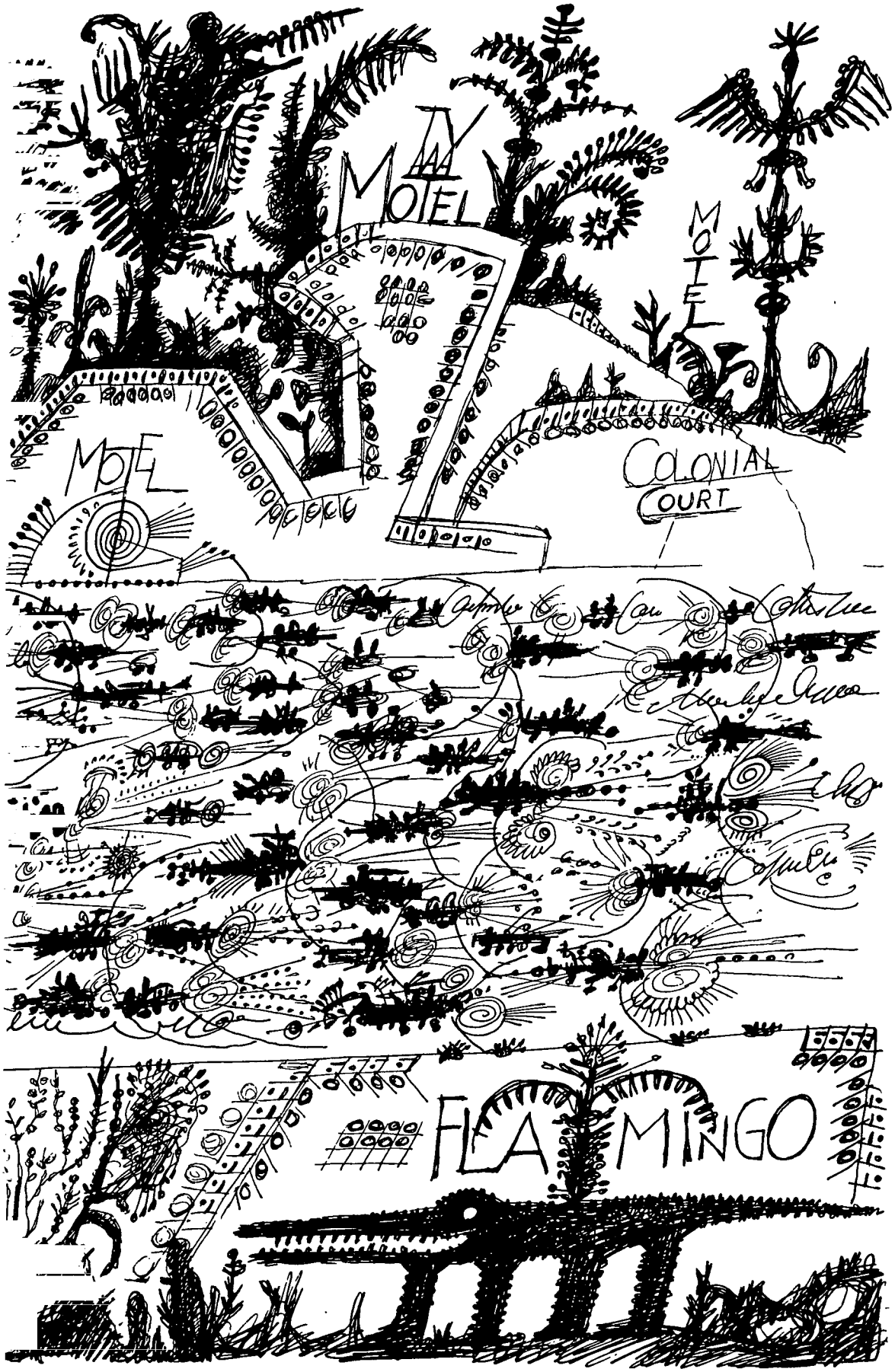

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Brian Crozier

The General's Generals

Letter from Paris

THE GENERAL, who is pale with black eyes, looked at me, with the expression not of a brass-hat, but of a man gentle, wise, and civilised. I have seen the same expression once before on a face that does not resemble this one in contours, the face of Field-Marshal Sir John Harding. As brass, they are roughly comparable.

Behind him a map of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East stretched across the wall, an immense map, large as a minor Veronese. We were sitting on red chairs and talking about the French army. And the noises that issued from the General's mouth were reassuring. The army, he told me, was a disciplined army. It was true that there had been a time of exaltation, in May, 1958, but that time had coincided with a breakdown of power in the metropolitan capital. Since then, some of the hotter heads had been moved out of Algeria. No, not General Massu, for in any case he was much less political than people had supposed. Besides, he had done and was still doing a good job; so, in fact, he was being left at his post a little longer than the normal spell of duty, to show that nobody was displeased with him.

"But," I insisted, "General de Gaulle's plan for Algeria means, in the last analysis, that the army may be ordered to protect the FLN from the *colons*. Will it obey that order?"

"Yes," said the General. "The army will obey its orders."

Not long after this conversation, General Massu was dismissed from his civil and military duties in Algiers, for having criticised President de Gaulle's policy for Algeria. The army then refused to fire on two groups of *colons* who had taken up arms against the Fifth Republic, because they feared the implications of the President's policy. Specifically, the *colons* feared that they might have to defend their views on Algeria's future (peacefully, at the polls) against those of the Moslem rebels' organisation, the FLN or National Liberation Front. And these two sets of view are, as they stand, irreconcilable: the *colons* want Algeria to remain French forever; the FLN, which now styles itself the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, has been fighting for the independence of Algeria.

I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the General ("my" General). But since a part of the army has now shown itself unwilling to fire on rebellious French settlers in a flagrant instance of defiance of the central authority, would the army be any more willing to fire on European rowdies trying to break up an FLN independence rally in, say, Algiers or Oran? For that is the situation that could arise if President de Gaulle's Algerian policy is ever implemented.

The President's policy was first stated in his speech of September 16th last, in which he offered Algerians of all origins a choice between secession, association with France and *francisation*. The barricades that were thrown up in Algiers on January 24th were intended to make the President change his mind and drop the offer of self-determination; instead, he reaffirmed it in the impressive speech of January 29th, which brought the army, grudgingly, to heel. What General de Gaulle achieved with this speech was the separation of two elements—the settlers and the army—which, in combination, had proved explosive in May, 1958. But if the settlers, alone, are not dangerous, the same is not true of the army, which has its own

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reasons for wanting to stay on in Algeria. In the simplest terms, the settlers fear the loss of a privileged way of life and the army a retreat that would look like a defeat. It must neither be defeated, nor be thought to have been defeated. At this point, however, General de Gaulle rejoins the army, for to him the Army and the Nation are indivisibly one and the nation, which is Resurgent, cannot suffer another defeat. This *mystique* is a powerful brake on the President's authority.

EVERYTHING, then, comes back to the army. Much is being asked of it. Either it must go on fighting—and it has already fought, in one way or another, for twenty years—or it must be ready to obey orders to protect the FLN from the *colons*, if there is a cease-fire and the FLN goes back to Algiers as a legal political party.

To reach the stage of obeying such orders, the army will have to unlearn years of indoctrination, to tell itself that the FLN leaders are not, after all, simply "common criminals," that they have "a right to campaign for independence," and that, by the same token, *"Algérie française"* is not an immutable concept.

Outside France, it is perhaps not sufficiently realised just how far and how deep the indoctrination of the French army has gone. Two personal stories may help.

In Saigon, we thought no censor could ever have had it so good, because he was his own briefing officer as well. Briefed, the correspondent tapped out his story, then showed it to the briefing officer, by now turned censor, who would draw the line—in blue—at inferences the correspondent might have drawn from his words of a moment earlier. The truth was finite and indivisible. The chief censor in my day (1952) was a major whose name was often in the papers in May and June, 1958. But by that time, he was a colonel teaching psychological warfare to the troops in Algeria. In our Indo-China days, one of his tussles with me arose out of an army broadcast to the Vietminh, calling on Ho Chi Minh to surrender. I had cabled the text of the broadcast, and the French papers had seen fit to splash it under banner headlines saying "PEACE-FEELERS IN INDO-CHINA." I was a news-agency man and not responsible for the headlines written by Paris sub-editors. This I told the major, who countered with the remark: *"Mais voyons! Vous savez bien que la propagande, c'est le mensonge officiel."*

The official lie. And indeed it often is. But the lie is useful only if it deceives, and then again, only if it deceives the right people. I have often felt that such official lies as the French army has felt compelled to tell were really part of a gigantic exercise in *self*-deception.

Six years after Saigon, another French major looked me coldly in the eye in the main barracks at Algiers and remarked: "Of course, you people have found the way to deal with a situation like this." I looked blank and asked: "Where?"

"In South Africa," said the major. . . . And there seemed little point in explaining that very few of us in Britain approved of *apartheid* or considered that we had anything in common with the government that was enforcing it in the name of a country which happened to belong to the Commonwealth.

From self-deception to praise for the least realistic of policies, the sequence is understandable. What is less consistent is the fact that the French army is committed to a policy which is the antithesis of *apartheid*: integration. The South African Nationalists are trying to segregate their "native" majority; the French army has been trying to *integrate* Algeria's, by turning the eight or nine million Moslems in its care into Frenchmen. Neither policy seems to have the slightest prospect of succeeding.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that the majors and colonels and generals of the French army have learned nothing between the dates of the two conversations I have summarised. The trouble almost certainly is that they are misapplying the lessons they have learnt. The most important of these lessons is the Communist theory of revolutionary warfare, as perfected by Mao Tse-tung in *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*. Few of the higher French officers had heard of this theory when the French army was sent to reconquer Indo-China after World War II. Indeed, too few of them had heard of it when the French were suffering their final defeat at Dien Bien Phu. In that brutal but perceptive book, *The Ugly American*, MacWhite, the American ambassador to the fictional state of Sarkhan, asks a group of high French officers: "Has any of you read the writings of Mao Tse-tung?" Then:

> There was a moment of silence. The senior French general, a man of wisdom and excellent connections, turned slightly red. The other French generals blanched. MacWhite leaned forward in his chair waiting for an answer.

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"If you are suggesting, Ambassador MacWhite, that the nation which produced Napoleon now has to go to a primitive Chinese for military instruction, I can tell you that you are not only making a mistake, you're being insulting," the senior French general finally said.

This fiction is probably no stranger than fact. The successive commanders of the French expeditionary corps failed to understand the political nature of the war they were fighting in Indo-China, or the military tactics of their enemy; nor, in consequence, did they grasp the connection between them. One of the most enlightened French officers, General Catroux, makes it clear in his book *Deux Actes du Drame Indochinois*, that General Navarre, the man who ordered the Dien Bien Phu operation, was unaware of the character of the contest in which he was engaged. From the first, the French had thought of the Indo-China expedition as an old-fashioned colonial war; unwilling to grant that the war was total, they fought it with irrelevant pill-boxes while the Vietminh gained control over the minds of the people.

The Indo-China war was scarcely over when the Algerian one began. At first, the French started making the same mistakes all over again. Gravely underestimating the challenge, they failed to realise that, once again, they were dealing with a revolutionary war. When realisation came, they made the further error of confusing a purely nationalistic struggle with the Communist-Nationalist one they had experienced in Indo-China. By 1957, however, the French colonels had completed their belated study of Mao Tse-tung's doctrines, equated them in all respects with the FLN's tactics, and derived from them a counter-theory of pacification.

This counter-theory is still in operation and deserves study. It is indeed ingenious and has yielded some striking successes. Yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that it is based on fundamental misconceptions and that it would be bound to fail if pursued to the bitter end.

The counter-theory is well documented, though the evidence is not readily available outside France. The most complete statement of it was in an article by J. Hogard entitled *"Guerre Révolutionnaire et Pacification,"* which appeared in *Revue Militaire d'Information*, the organ of the French Defence Ministry, in January, 1957. The next issue was devoted entirely to aspects of "revolutionary war" and since then a number of articles in the same publication have returned to the subject.

Hogard's analysis of revolutionary war is, on the whole, valid; and, given his assumptions, the counter-measures he prescribes are logical. But if, as I am suggesting, the assumptions are mistaken, then one begins to understand why the French armed forces in Algeria had still not crushed the Algerian "Army of National Liberation" (ALN) when the war entered its sixth year on November 1st. The fact that they had not done so is, on paper, remarkable, for the French armed forces in Algeria number nearly 400,000 and have an overwhelming superiority in armaments, whereas, according to French official sources, the ALN does not exceed 40,000 "Regulars," and may not number more than 25,000. Even if the National Liberation Front's figure of 100,000 men is accepted, the failure to crush the rebellion is remarkable.

I OUGHT to make it clear that I do not accept the FLN's own explanation of its staying power, which is that its insurrection is "the revolution of an entire people." That is a large claim. The fact that at all times the Algerian Moslem casualties of FLN terrorism have outnumbered the French casualties does not support it. A population that has to be kept ruthlessly in line is unlikely to be wholeheartedly behind the movement it is supposed to be supporting. On the other hand, it does not follow that the mass of the Moslem population was on the French side; if it had been, the French would have won the war years ago. In short, the rebels must always have had *some* popular support, but the majority of the population, caught between two fires, desired only to be left alone and to have its lot improved.

Hogard, in the article I have mentioned, remarks correctly that in (Communist) revolutionary war, the rebels establish "parallel hierarchies": on the one hand, the Regular Army and the Party apparatus, on the other hand, a Front organisation through which the Party's will is imposed on the entire population. In imposing its domination, the Party makes use of techniques such as brain-washing, denunciation, and self-criticism. Conformity is thus imposed on the entire population, though the Party tries to give the impression that it is merely carrying out the people's united will.

Hogard, again correctly, distinguishes five phases of revolutionary war:

1. Agitation and propaganda, through secret cells, with the object of conditioning the population for revolution.

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2. The creation of a network of information and opposition infiltrating all organisations, trade unions, etc.; the fomenting of strikes, sabotage, and riots.
3. The formation of armed bands and the practice of terrorism.
4. The establishment of a rebel administration in "liberated zones."
5. The undermining of enemy morale as a preliminary to a general offensive.

There is no doubt that the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist revolutions went through all five phases and that the Malayan Communist insurrection achieved the first three and aimed at the last two. The analysis, therefore, is correct, whether it is based on Mao Tse-tung's theories or on the practical application of them. But the author makes the first of his fundamental errors at the very beginning, when he lumps the FLN rebellion together with the Vietminh and other Communist insurrections as "fighting revolutionary movements which are attempting to seize power by violence and impose a totalitarian dictatorship . . . for the ultimate benefit of the Cominform."

It may well be true that the FLN has, from the first, aimed at a totalitarian dictatorship, but as it has never clearly stated its aims, this cannot be proved or disproved. It is certainly not true, on the other hand, that it has been consciously working "for the benefit of the Cominform," and the French attempts to identify the FLN movement with the Communists have never been convincing. Whether its efforts, if successful, would ultimately be of benefit to the international Communist movement is an arguable, but purely hypothetical, proposition.

In dealing with pacification, the author (whose views, remember, have become official doctrine) makes another fundamental error of appreciation, when he writes:

> It is false to pretend . . . that the Algerian rebellion was born of a general discontent among the Moslem masses due to an insufficiently developed political, economic, and social state. Its true cause is the will of the FLN and of Cairo to drive France out of North Africa. *It is therefore vain to hope to put an end to the revolutionary war solely by political, economic, and social reforms.* (Italics in the original.)

It would be hard to find greater confusion in a shorter space. Let us try to unravel the tangle. Any objective study of the Algerian situation will show that there was widespread discontent in Algeria and that it was indeed due to inadequate political, economic, and social progress. The leaders of the FLN went into rebellion because it appeared to them that the French would never allow them the political outlets that would make economic and social progress possible. That is the answer to the question the author begs but does not put: "Why did the FLN wish to drive the French out of North Africa?"

The mention of Cairo is a red herring. It is probably true that President Gamal Abdul Nasser would have liked the French out of Africa; and it has been proved that the FLN receives help from Egypt. But the implication that the insurrection broke out partly *because* "Cairo" wanted to drive the French out of North Africa is unwarranted: Cairo helped the FLN because it was furthering "the Arab cause" by trying to drive the French out or at any rate reduce French influence to zero; the FLN, in turn, accepted Egypt's help because it needed help, because the Egyptians are "brother Arabs," and because its aims did not conflict with Nasser's.

In view of this confusion of fact and fancy, it is not surprising that the author's italicised conclusion is, at best, only part of the truth. Once a rebellion has broken out, it is indeed vain to hope to put an end to it solely by reforms; by then, it is too late and armed force becomes necessary, *as well* as reforms. On the other hand, reforms, carried out loyally and in time, might well have averted the Algerian insurrection.

To be fair to the author, he adds that it is equally vain to hope for success solely as a result of armed action, though in this instance, he is right for the wrong reason, for he argues that the reason why military action alone is inadequate is that armed bands, once defeated and dispersed, are able to re-group. In fact, as the argument unfolds, it becomes clear that he is suggesting not reforms but psychological warfare and counter-subversion to complement military action. Then, in the process of destroying "illusions," he asserts that a revolutionary war cannot be brought to an end by negotiation. "Negotiation," he writes, "accelerates . . . the process of revolutionary war." This important observation enshrines an official dogma and explains why even President de Gaulle, despite his power and popularity, has not dared to propose negotiations with the FLN.

From diagnosis, Hogard passes to prescription. What he does, in effect, is to invert the Chinese theory; Maoism, like Hegelianism

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before it, has been turned upside down. The repressors become the revolutionaries! There is, of course, much sense in this proposition, but it seems to me to rest on a glaring and elementary fallacy. Mao Tse-tung's army, born of the peasantry, naturally identified itself with the peasants. "Lending a hand with the harvest" was important, but far more important was the fact that the troops were themselves peasants. Moreover, on both sides of the Chinese civil war —since it really was a civil war—the troops and the people were Chinese. Now if Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had had the imagination to grasp the nature of the challenge to his power, he could quite easily have adopted his adversary's tactics. His troops, too, were peasants. And of course, they were just as Chinese.

It does not seem to have occurred to the authors of the French theory of pacification that the French forces in Algeria could not hope to identify themselves with the Algerian Moslem population. A Frenchman is neither a Berber nor an Arab; nor, with exceptions, can he speak Arabic or Kabyle. Certainly the mass of conscripts doesn't. It is perhaps harder for Frenchmen than for others—say, Englishmen—to admit the relevance of these facts, for the French idea of nationality (though not necessarily of citizenship) has always rested on the concept, not of race, but of "advancing civilisation." It has always been possible, under certain conditions, for Vietnamese or Algerians to become French citizens; and Algerians were "French" whether they liked it or not.

The assumption that the French army can actually identify itself with the people is not, in fact, stated in so many words. It is, however, implicit in the theory of pacification. Alternatively, the evident fact that the French army cannot hope to emulate the successes of Mao Tse-tung's "People's Liberation Army" is left unstated. In fact, the degree of success the French army *has* achieved in getting the population on its side—and it is not inconsiderable—is probably due at least as much to the self-defeating terrorism of the FLN as to the army's new paternalism.

With these reservations in mind, Hogard's prescription for pacification is intelligent. He lays down three principles:

1. The psychological arm must be exploited. The population must be made conscious that the Army is fighting for an ideal. Opinion must be formed and the people set against the rebels. It is therefore essential for the Army to be friendly towards the population.

2. Since revolutionary war is slow, the Regular Army's capacity for speed must be used to the full. The enemy has to be blocked at the first, second, or third stages and on no account allowed to reach the fourth stage of setting up a rebel administration in "liberated zones," much less the fifth stage of a general offensive (which, of course, the Vietminh did reach).

3. Since the secret of revolutionary success is infrastructure, the enemy's "politico-military" organisation must be destroyed in all domains: political, economic, social, cultural, and military.

Hogard goes on to propose military or semi-military measures, including the resettlement of populations.

THE pacification theory, as exposed by Hogard, Colonel Lacheroy, and others in the *Revue Militaire d'Information*, has been drummed into the heads of commissioned officers at countless lectures in Algeria. In putting the theory into practice, the army has become the hydra-headed thing it is to-day, mother and father of the people, builder of schools and homes, teacher and doctor, protector and mentor. Incontestably, this paternalistic extension of the army's functions has brought returns. Certain areas have been cleared of rebels. The population has acquired the habit of going to the army with its troubles and may even have persuaded itself that the army—that is, France—is there to stay.

Conversely, the army has identified itself with the population and with the country to a dangerous degree. While persuading the population of the permanence of the French presence, the army has accustomed itself to the permanence of its own presence. This, above all, is the factor that makes Algeria the dominant issue it still is in French policy. The Fourth Republic fell partly because it was incapable of even facing the problem of Algeria, much less solving it. The Fifth Republic, which *is* facing it, is now looking beyond the "solution" to the further problem of "bringing the army home." For even if the FLN rebels lay down their arms, the army will not go home for years. In his wisdom (which in these matters is great), General de Gaulle has foreseen that it may not be possible to hold a referendum on Algeria's future for four years after a cease-fire. During that period—which will not begin until there *is* a cease-fire, the army will, of course, remain in Algeria, although it ought to be possible progressively to reduce its swollen numbers. But what is to be done with an army which has identified itself with a country, which has a sense of mission but may have to

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be deprived of it, which has become highly skilled in counter-subversion but which is quite out of touch with the techniques of the nuclear age?

General de Gaulle's much-quoted recent speech at the *École Militaire* provides clues that have been neglected by those who focused their attention on the passage that appeared to take France out of the integrated defence system of NATO. The equally dramatic passage about France's need to have its own nuclear striking force was, of course, also noted, but too little attention was given to the next passage, in which the General told the army that the creation of this striking force would be "our great task during the years ahead."

In Paris to-day, the best non-political minds in General de Gaulle's administration are bending their efforts to this end. All of them would rather buy or accept a gift of nuclear weaponry from the countries that already have it than go to the enormous trouble and expense of making their own with several years' leeway to overcome. But in the provision of this weaponry and in the modernisation of the army's techniques they see the only way of ever getting the army out of Algeria. The mastery of the nuclear future is to replace the mission of the Algerian past.

Postscript from Algiers

FRESH macadam marks the spots where the followers of Ortiz and Lagaillarde ripped up paving stones as raw material for the barricades of Algiers. Orderly reconstruction was as fast as revolutionary destruction had been at the end of January. The anti-Gaullist slogans on the walls have been effaced, and this impassioned, tumultuous city goes about its business, only normally quarrelsome now, with the deeper hatreds seething below the surface.

The army, its constant defender and occasional ally, has been shaken by one thing above all others since the events of January: the abolition of its *Cinquième Bureau*, which dealt with "psychological action." True, the "fifth" was an upstart, created in 1945 after the discovery that war had a fifth dimension. But since the more recent discovery that pacification is a battle for people's minds, it had become almost as famous as the *deuxième* (intelligence) and the more mundane other *bureaux* dealing with supply, operations, and other aspects of old-fashioned war.

Though abolished, the "fifth" is muted rather than silenced: its psychological burdens are shared out among the other *bureaux*. But the loss of autonomy in psychological action is a heavy blow to the analysts of revolutionary warfare and the theoreticians of pacification. As it happens, the last two heads of the "fifth" are colonels whom I knew well as majors during the Indo-China war. The last but one, a subtle Jesuit, concentrated on influencing the Moslem population; now operational once again, he is in the *bled* fighting Moslem revolutionaries with conventional arms. The last, a simpler soldier of the sunniest good nature, is back with his wife and children at Versailles, perhaps bewildered by the turn of events. *He* had concentrated on the European population and that, it seems, was his undoing. Anybody wishing to influence European Algerians ought first to be proofed against the contagion of *their* ideas, or he will end up influenced rather than influencing. "Perhaps it was thought that he had identified himself too closely with them," said another colonel who was his contemporary at St. Cyr and clearly felt for his departed friend.

Contagion and identification with the settlers are indeed the occupational hazards of the metropolitan soldiers and administrators stationed in Algeria. From Soustelle in 1955, to Delouvrier in 1959, every governor-general, minister-resident, or delegate-general has been through it and emerged marked, apparently, for life. Even the foreign visitor may find it hard to resist the pressure: seen from Algiers, the Algerian problem doesn't look the same as seen from Paris, or in turn, from London, Tunis, or Cairo. Where London sees a wasteful expenditure of allied effort and a drain on Afro-Asian goodwill, Tunis sees a struggle of Arab and Berber for the independence and unity of the Maghreb, and Cairo a phase in the Arab revolution. Moscow and Peking have their points of view, which the French army's theorists have too facilely identified with Cairo's. But Algiers could snap its fingers at these and other opinions if only Paris were unambiguously in favour of French Algeria. M. Guy Mollet, the French Socialist leader, said he was when the settlers showered him with tomatoes on February 6th, 1956. And the Fourth Republic crumbled because Algiers no longer believed its leaders when they went on dutifully saying "French Algeria." And so . . . de Gaulle, the saviour called to power by army and settlers, who does not even bother to say it because he alone is

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strong enough to offer the Algerian people a future of their own choice. Small wonder that the settlers are bitter and the army bewildered.

When General Faure, transferred to other duties, bade farewell to his troops at Tizi-Ouzou, in Great Kabylia, he referred to those "who have given their lives so that this soil of Kabylia shall remain French." Although out of harmony with General de Gaulle (and not for the first time, since he served Vichy France), General Faure was doing no more than echo his brother officers. They have told their troops that they are fighting to keep Algeria French, to frustrate the knavish tricks of Communism, to preserve the last foothold of Western civilisation in Africa. They have believed these things and have been believed when they said them. But what are they to say when the day of the ultimate referendum draws nearer, when the gains of the battles fought since November, 1954, are exposed to the gamble of the ballots? And who will convey the message—whatever message it is—now that the *Cinquième Bureau* has gone?

I should not like these questions to remain rhetorical. To the FLN's cry of "independence" the army has opposed other cries, equally apt to play on popular emotions: "French Algeria," "integration," "equality of all Frenchmen" (including the Moslems). The middle course of "self-rule in association with France" may be infinitely duller, but it is also infinitely wiser. Now that it is clear beyond doubt that President de Gaulle favours this middle course, it may have a good chance of a majority at the referendum. Whether or not Algeria ever becomes a federal state on the Swiss model, its eight million Moslems can ill-afford a complete break with France, which alone can offer them a rising standard of living. This message, it seems to me, is a worthy outlet for the French army, but it can be conveyed without psychological warfare service.

One of Those Hot Days

The afternoon cloudless, hot, quiet,
As it had been for days
(Though of course, there were always
Noises, harvesters climbing the hill,
The crackle of stubble, apples plopping,
But simply they didn't impinge),
When out of nothing a jet
Low overhead came screaming,
And the blue like silk tore,
Silence after it dropping.
Lying, half-reading, half-dreaming,
I was pitched to an open boat,
Bullets spattering his shoulders and throat
As the plane turned idly away,
That one, not this, on a similar day.
An old terror, long since scotched,
But in its wake others came streaming
And as I sat up and watched
My son playing, suddenly he raced,
Without warning or looking,
Over the lane and, for a split second,
—Until he was over—the idea
Came to me: This has been always
How it happened, nobody looking
Or thinking or doing anything
In particular, one of those hot days,
Blue skies, harvesters and stubble,
When *IT* happens, and the bubble
Bursts, and we are not asleep,
But what happens, happens for keeps.

Alan Ross

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Colin Wilson

On the Bridge

A Memoir of the 'Fifties

I WAS sitting on the wall in the courtyard of the British Museum, eating a tomato sandwich, when a young man approached me. He said: "I see you're reading Kierkegaard. I wonder if you'd care to have a look at the thesis on Heidegger I'm studying?" It was actually pretty obvious that I was reading Kierkegaard. The Museum copy of the *Selected Writings* has gold letters an inch high down its spine, and I'd left it at the top of a pile of other books. All the same, his offer struck me as curious. There is not much fraternisation in the Reading Room (unlike the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, where you get the idea you've wandered into a club). However, I took it that he wanted to be friendly. So I told him I didn't read German, and that anyway, I wasn't particularly interested in German existentialism, which seemed to me an abortion. He sat down at the side of me and opened a flask of coffee, and we contemplated the American tourists who sat eating their sandwiches on the steps, unaware of the danger from the pigeons whose aim has an impressive accuracy. I liked his quiet, American voice; we talked about Descartes and Berkeley, on whom he was writing a thesis. Finally, he said:

"You know, I'm certain I've seen you somewhere apart from this place. You don't speak on Hyde Park Corner, do you?"

I admitted I did. At this time (the spring of 1953) I was a member of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation of North London. During the previous winter, I'd spoken for the London Anarchist Group, but they didn't like my heresies, and finally the group had separated into squabbling factions when Herbert Read accepted a knighthood. (Half the Anarchists were all for expelling him—a difficult matter since there is no official membership of the L.A.G.—while the other half felt that his name would be an even more valuable instrument of propaganda now that he had a title.) I had joined the anti-Read faction; not because I gave a damn about the knighthood, but because most of my friends in the group opposed it. So a couple of us slouched off to the gloomy headquarters of the Syndicalist Workers—a damp room in a Paddington slum—and proposed to borrow their platform at week-ends, and try for converts in the Charing Cross Road and in Hyde Park.

(I had no particular political convictions—anarchist, syndicalist, or otherwise. My sole bias was a certain pro-Wilson tendency; I spoke in Hyde Park because I was bored, frustrated, and had a vague feeling that something ought to be done about something. I also wanted to practise speaking in public, and would have been equally happy to discourse on Communism, Mormonism, or Nudism.)

We finished our sandwiches and wandered back into the Museum, while I gave him a sketch of the complicated inner-politics of the Anarchists. His interest flattered me. Finally, before we separated to go to our seats, he said: "Look, why don't you come over and have a meal? I'd like you to meet a friend of mine." I said O.K., and we arranged it for the following evening. It didn't strike me as particularly curious that he should take the trouble to make my acquaintance and invite me to supper. In the coffee-houses and wine-lodges where I spent my evenings, this kind of thing happened all the time; you were likely to become a bosom pal of a man you had never seen two days before and whom you wouldn't recognise in a month's time. Per-

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haps because human relationships help to insulate you from a sense of futility.

So I cycled over from the hospital in Fulham (where I was working as a porter) to the address in Berners Avenue, and the door was opened by the American boy. (He had introduced himself as John.) We tramped up two flights of stairs into a tiny room, lined with hundreds of books. An exotic cooking smell penetrated from the next room. A man wandered in, clutching a kitchen knife and a green pepper. John introduced us: "George, this is Colin."

I was surprised. I had expected him to be John's age. Instead, I found myself shaking hands with a plump, middle-aged man with a mid-European accent. He invited me to make myself comfortable, and went back to his cooking.

I felt instantly at home in the room. The shelves were full of Kafka, Mann, and Hesse, although some of the volumes that interested me most were in German or Hungarian. There were books on comparative religion, and a copy of Ballou's *Bible of the World*. Another case was full of record albums (all 78's; these were the days before LP's became popular—I noted some Beethoven quartets and the Mahler fourth symphony (the only one I knew). I had a premonition that I was going to like George a great deal.

In fact, this proved to be so. He was the first member I had met of a species that I have since come to know and like—the cultured, metaphysical mid-European. I wonder occasionally if it is a species that is becoming extinct. They are not numerous. Thomas Mann belonged to it; so (to judge by *Lolita*) does Vladimir Nabokov. I know only a few others: Erich Heller of Swansea, Heinrich Walz of Heidelberg. . . . I can count them on the fingers of one hand. For them, questions of human destiny and human freedom are of great importance; they know Dostoievsky's Legend of the Grand Inquisitor by heart.

The supper was excellent—a meat dish, cooked according to some Hungarian recipe, followed by guavas and cream. The conversation was vague and general—about Dostoievsky, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Eliot. I had recently been studying Gurdjieff, and warmly recommended Kenneth Walker's book *Venture with Ideas* and Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous*. After the meal, he insisted on playing me some Bruckner, with whom I was unfamiliar. Towards midnight I left, feeling well-fed, relaxed, and enormously pleased with my new acquaintance. Nothing had been said about Hyde Park or the Anarchists, and I had forgotten that this was supposed to be my reason for meeting George.

A few days later he contacted me and asked me over again for supper. This time, John was not present. We began by speaking of Gurdjieff. George had tried to read *All and Everything*, and had come to the conclusion that Gurdjieff was a fake. I got considerably excited, and tried to explain that *All and Everything* is the worst possible book to begin a study of Gurdjieff with, that he had written it deliberately in a prolix and repetitious style to discourage "culture vultures." To my dismay and irritation, George rejected this explanation, and declined to try Kenneth Walker or Ouspensky. He told me stiffly: "When I wish to make the acquaintance of a philosopher, I go direct to the fountainhead, not to some interpreter."

This was the first of several discords. The next occurred when I talked about the Church and expressed my admiration for Pascal. George quoted some scathing epigram from Nietzsche. I countered by quoting Hulme, and asserting that if I thought the Church could ever regain the power she possessed in the Middle Ages, I'd enter a seminary immediately. George launched into a diatribe on Christianity, and referred to the clergy as "crows in black" or something of the sort. This irritated me—not because I had any special feelings about the priesthood, but because he obviously expected to shock me. I had passed through the stage of total atheism and Rimbaudian blasphemy at thirteen; later I had re-created a religious attitude out of bits of Nietzsche, Eliot, Shaw, Dante, and the Bhagavad Gita. George's anti-religious attitude seemed to me incredibly naïve, and his assumption that I was as shockable as some vicar's daughter struck me as an insult.

But later in the evening, we spoke of the anarchists, and I began to understand why I had been asked to supper. I left George to do the talking for about an hour, and an interesting story emerged. He had left Hungary in the 'thirties. During the war, he had been in the army and had worked for Intelligence. At the end of the war, he had been given the task of "de-Nazifying" a particularly tough bunch of young Nazis. The authorities had little hope; their attempts at brain-washing had been met

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with total contempt and some physical violence. George was tried as a last resort.

He described his methods to me. He made no attempt to talk about politics but simply engaged them in discussion on neutral subjects. His young Nazis had that voracious appetite for intellectual discussion that I have noticed in German youth; they seem capable of going on for twenty-four hours at a stretch. So George played possum, and let them expound their ideas to him, shooting an occasional question. Besides, he endeared himself to them by making critical comments on the British and American way of life, and the corruptions nurtured by the democratic system. To everybody's surprise, it worked triumphantly. By using the Socratic method of asking questions and leaving his interlocutors to tie themselves in knots, he soon had them criticising their own beliefs. At this point, George would expound his own ideas—the need for tolerance and freedom, the evils inherent in all ideologies, the importance of refusing to be a member of the herd. (I wonder if the British Army would have been particularly happy if they'd realised what George was up to—that he was casting out seven devils of fascism with eight devils of total anti-authoritarianism? However, they never found out.)

When the former young Nazis returned to Germany, they kept in close contact with George, and formed a movement to propagate his ideas. One of his most enthusiastic converts was the young Baron von Altenburg, and his home near Kassel became one of the headquarters of the movement. They provided it with a name —*Die Brücke* (The Bridge)—and set about the work of proselytising. To begin with, they were fantastically successful. Germany was in the grip of post-war depression; a new idealism was needed. *Brücke* spread from Germany into France and the Scandinavian countries. George headed the movement in England, with von Altenburg as his chief lieutenant on the continent.

However, the depression passed, and the enthusiasm dwindled. Only a few faithful spirits remained by the time I met George.

But this was where I came in. George told me that he had gained his few English followers by speaking in Hyde Park. But he regarded himself as no orator; his manner was essentially intimate. He had gathered a few people around him, and talked with them standing on the ground, disliking the idea of a platform. But now, he declared, it was time *Bridge* made another effort to expand, and for this, platform oratory was a necessity. Soon, he intended to move out of the diminutive rooms in Berners Avenue, into a house. It would be my task to persuade idealistic young men to attend meetings at the new house.

Later that evening (it was a Saturday) we took a bus down to Hyde Park. George said: "Well, go ahead—talk." I protested that I had no platform. He pointed to a chair by the railings. So I stood on it and waved my arms and started to talk, and soon a crowd gathered. I forget what I talked about—probably syndicalism—but it went well, and after half an hour the crowd was enormous, and I was exhausted. So I wound the meeting up (or handed it over to some gentleman who wanted to tell funny stories and take a collection) and we went off to Lyons for some tea. George was delighted. All I had to do now was to learn something about *Bridge*, and we were in partnership.

About a week later, I suddenly felt that I could bear no more of the Western Hospital, so I sold my books, dug out my passport, and went to Paris. Bill Hopkins joined me, and we lived precariously for a couple of months, working for a couple of English magazines. We were selling subscriptions on a commission basis, and the commissions were minute, so we were frequently forced to impound the subscriptions. I lived off chocolate; Bill, as far as I can remember, ate nothing but smoked hundreds of cigarettes. Finally we explained to the editors about the harsh economics of selling subscriptions, and came back to England on money borrowed from the British consulate. Immediately on arriving in London, I rang George and asked if he could put me up overnight. He answered with an invitation to come and stay in his new house for a few days.

Here, for the first time, I came into contact with *Bridge* members. Meetings were held on Tuesday evenings. I arrived on Saturday. So for three days I listened endlessly to Bruckner and Mahler, and involved George and John in discussions on Dostoievsky and the metaphysical nature of freedom. And on Tuesday evening, the "disciples" turned up.

I was immensely disappointed. To begin with, there was only one pretty girl among them, and she was married to one of the *Bridge* members. And at first glance, the young men

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failed to strike me as promising material for an intellectual rebellion. They all looked honest and "nice" enough, but dull.

Moreover, it soon transpired that the "discussion" began with a long speech from George which seemed to be interminable. My memory of it is vague, but I believe it went something like this:

"Is *Bridge* an ideology? In order to answer this question, we must first define the word 'ideology.' (Then followed several examples of ideologies.) An ideology is a system of ideas about man or society. All ideologies start from the concept of man or society. They all believe in imposing their general notions upon individuals. But this is a denial of individual freedom. Therefore all ideologies are undesirable. . . ."

Then followed a demonstration that *Bridge* could not be an ideology, since it didn't want to impose anything on anybody. . . . This, George concluded, ended the series of discussions on what *Bridge* was *not*; at the next meeting they would begin a series of discussions on what *Bridge is*.

The young men then began tortuously following the various hares that George had loosed during the past half-hour. Again, it seemed to me that no one was asking the right questions. They all seemed to agree that Fascism and Communism were very wicked, and that Socialism is neither here nor there, that the important thing is freedom. Then somebody (probably George) raised the Kantian question of the greatest good of the greatest number, and they all lumbered after that like a football team on a cross-country run. Finally, in sheer exasperation, I broke in, quoting Nietzsche, and saying it was not a question of freedom *from* what, but of freedom *for* what? Never mind what they didn't want; what was it they wanted? Before the talk about freedom begins, we ought to consider the question of who is to be free. If we are talking about a crowd of fools, then freedom might do more harm than good.

I had hoped my irritation might stimulate the discussion, which had become unbearably turgid. But everyone seemed to be slightly cowed, with the exception of George. All eyes turned upon him as the defender of *Bridge*, and the evening turned into a duologue between us. Finally, round about ten, we had coffee, and listened to a movement of Bruckner's fourth symphony. Then everybody went home.

As soon as I was alone with George, I told him flatly that I considered he was wasting his time with his "disciples." They came to sit at his feet, but they would never learn to think for themselves in a million years. He told me gently that he thought I was being unreasonable, and that when I got older I would agree that he was right. This irritated me still more; the fact that I was twenty-two seemed to me to be irrelevant. The next morning, I hitch-hiked to Leicester and took a job in a big store over Christmas. It was about three or four months before I saw George again.

I was back in London, working in a laundry, and trying to finish the first version of *Ritual in the Dark*. George sent me an invitation to a party. Familiar with the excellence of his catering, I accepted with enthusiasm. I took Bill along with me, and discovered (to my surprise) that he and George had met several years before, when Bill had attended a few *Bridge* meetings. Bill's feelings had apparently been pretty close to my own.

The "disciples" were more fun at a party than at a *Bridge* meeting. One of them played on a guitar and sang English folk-songs, another did a sort of Bernard-Miles West-countryman act, while another young man was called upon to read from the poems of John Donne. The pretty girl got rather delightfully drunk and had to be carried upstairs. She was married to the young man who read Donne, and whose name was Stuart Holroyd. I saw Bill engaged in earnest conversation with Holroyd for about a quarter of an hour. But he finally edged over to me, reported that he thought they were all "drips," and suggested we go back home. So we went.

Since I lived in North Finchley, I found it easy to cycle over to George's place in Mill Hill. We still got on capitally when we were alone; we played records and talked ideas without any violent disagreement. But the subject of *Bridge* usually started a bitter argument. In defending himself against my charge of wasting time, George had quoted Socrates with such frequency that I began to see Socrates as the key to his personality. Undoubtedly, George possessed the same, almost erotic charm attributed by Plato to his master. The quiet Hungarian voice, the curiously liquid-brown eyes, the serenity of manner which could become charmingly reproachful when I lost my temper, were all combined to give his interlocutor the impression that he was the only person in the world who mattered to George. This frequently had the

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effect of totally disarming me. He could, when he wanted, give an overwhelming impression of gentleness, love, and consideration. So long as we were alone, I found him immensely likeable. But as soon as the "disciples" gathered around, his idealism became suspect, and it seemed to me that he was indulging a fantasy in which he played the part of The Teacher, a mixture of Christ and Socrates, for which an audience of admiring young men was essential.

At the *Bridge* meetings I attended, it became obvious to me that my annoyance was directed less at George than at the doctrines he was preaching. These seemed to me essentially inadequate, incomplete. *Of course* freedom is the only thing that really matters; of course totalitarianism is undesirable. Where do we go from there? In a sense, I found him annoying because, in over-emphasising freedom, he forced me to insist on the challenge-and-response mechanism, on the need for discipline, and on the stupidity of most human beings. In irritation at what seemed to me a wishy-washy and short-sighted anarchism, I found myself ranting like a convinced Fascist. And this annoyed hell out of me. In the opposition between spirit and necessity, freedom and authority, I found myself cheering for spirit and freedom. But if the dichotomy is reduced to a question of political freedom or leadership, "culture" or vulgarity, I am carried away by irritation that these oppositions should be mistaken for extremes, and tend to say more than I mean. When George's "disciples" got carried away by enthusiasm in condemning television or the *Daily Mirror* or "Workers' Playtime," I would find myself going all thin-lipped like T. S. Eliot at a football match, and quoting T. E. Hulme in a rasping voice, or Yeats' *Meru*:

> *Civilisation is hooped together, brought*
> *Under a rule, under the semblance of peace*
> *By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,*
> *And he, despite his terror, cannot cease*
> *Ravening through century after century,*
> *Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come*
> *Into the desolation of reality. . . .*

At these times I would be carried away until I sounded like Henry Irving playing Corporal Brewster.

It was after one such occasion that George requested me to come to no more *Bridge* meetings. I would, he explained, always be welcome at *Bridge* parties; but on the meetings themselves I acted only as a disruptive influence. He assured me that his feelings towards me were of the friendliest, but it would be many years before we would see eye to eye. One day I would become more mature and see that he was right. . . .

THIS kind of patronage infuriated me. It may have been shortly after this that I spent a whole morning in the British Museum writing him a long letter, a violent indictment of his ideas and of himself personally. It seemed to me that the two were being thoroughly mixed up, and he was making his ideas an excuse for indulging a taste for playing Socrates. My main line of attack was that, if he was serious about his ideas, he would look for some more effective way of propagating them than lecturing to his "disciples"—writing a book, for example. (In his younger days, George had published poetry in Hungarian.) It seemed to me that, in restricting himself to the Tuesday meetings, he was betraying the same craving for immediate "effect" that drove Dickens, in later life, to give public readings from his novels. And in throwing me out of the meetings, he was confirming my suspicions that they were intended to be sessions of "George-worship," conducted with the decorum of a Church of England service.

The immediate effect of this letter was a kind of reconciliation. I went to supper, and we settled down to a serious discussion of ideas. I explained that, in my view, his weakness consisted in an over-emphasis of "sweetness and light." Preaching universal tolerance to a small crowd of not-very-bright young men seemed to me a boring half-measure. I accused him of failing to understand the forces of modern history or the forces that had kept the Church in power for so many centuries. George immediately asked me to explain my defence of the Church. At this point, one of us used the term "subconscious mind," and it proved to be the magic pass-key. Provided I defended my belief in the mystical and the irrational in terms of Freudian psychology, it was O.K. We agreed that all that matters is for man to break through to this enormous power-house that underlies consciousness; our disagreement lay only in the means. For me the answer had to be subjective, to lie in a personal discipline. For George, it was important to persuade these young men to think for themselves, to appreciate music and poetry; he was not a writer by vocation but a teacher. . . .

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When John arrived home later, he was surprised to find us in amicable agreement. But this was of short duration. Within a few weeks, we were arguing as violently as ever. The discussion tended to get personal. I was accused of "confused thinking," of not knowing what I "really meant," of being irritated by George's "maturity and serenity"; I countered with accusations of smugness and laziness. On some occasions I left him in a furious mood, determined never to see him again. But he was good-tempered and amiable, and always seemed glad to see me. And I was sleeping in the open in a waterproof sleeping-bag, and spending my days in the British Museum, so the evenings of Bruckner and Beethoven were a welcome diversion.

One day, George invited me round to a "cultural evening." There were readings from his favourite humanist philosophers and an hour or so of music. This gave me an idea. I proposed that *I* give a cultural evening, reading from my favourite poets and philosophers. He agreed readily. This delighted me. Since I was no longer allowed to state my objections to the *Bridge* group, I would spend a whole evening presenting my indictment in terms of poetry and philosophy.

AT THIS time, my girl-friend was looking after my books for me. I spent an evening going through them, marking various passages for reading. (Many of these passages were subsequently included in *The Outsider*.) I chose deliberately to illustrate my feeling of the world's basic violence and irrationality. It was designed as an attack on sweetness and light, on political utopianism and scientific humanism. There were chunks from *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, from Hemingway and Blake, Newman and Hulme.

Half-way through my preparations, I decided I needed an accomplice. The only member of the *Bridge* group who seemed a tolerable reader was Stuart Holroyd. My difficulty lay in the fact that I was pretty sure he wouldn't abet an attack on George. So I approached him and asked him if he'd be willing to give some readings from the metaphysical poets; my aim, I explained, was to demonstrate the self-division produced by intellect in imaginative writing.

Up to this point, I had gained a distinct impression that Holroyd was vaguely hostile. He very seldom spoke at *Bridge* meetings, but his occasional comments had been in defence of George. I hoped my Machiavellianism would conceal my true intentions until it was too late. I was mistaken. Holroyd tumbled in no time at all. But to my enormous surprise, instead of refusing to have anything to do with it, he joined me with enthusiasm. I realised that his taciturnity at *Bridge* meetings had concealed a growing dissatisfaction with George. Now we spent several evenings discussing the reading, marking passages of William James, Dostoievsky, Nietzsche, and Hulme. Finally, on the evening of the reading, we staggered around to George's clutching about a hundred books between us.

The direction of the reading was pretty obvious from the word go. Using deliberate shock tactics, we opened by reading some of the most revolting bits from the *Seven Pillars*, and Hemingway's description of bodies hanging on a barbed-wire fence in *Natural History of the Dead*. In between readings, we expounded our theme: that in the face of a world capable of overpowering beauty and overpowering terror, simple rationalism is an inadequate reaction. And trusting emotional attitudes are completely out of place. The contradictions call for an agonised intellectual effort; the agony is a sign of awareness of reality. The belief in sweetness and light is mere self-deception or deliberate laziness.

Half-way through the reading, we stopped for coffee. The room was crowded, and everyone was looking a little bewildered; but Stuart and I were enjoying ourselves like mad. George murmured, "You are twisting a knife in my stomach."

The main item in the second half of the reading was a long section from the Night-town scene of *Ulysses*, complete with blasphemy, delirium, and Anglo-Saxon profanities. This again was a deliberate shock-tactic. At the end of the reading, everybody looked dazed. There was no discussion. Only a Catholic friend we had taken along said that, after all that, he had decided he agreed with George, and would renounce Catholicism. (He wasn't joking—he actually ceased to be a Catholic.)

In a sense, this meeting was the end of my association with George. I still saw him occasionally, but it was understood that we were irreconcilably opposed. Instead, I saw a great deal of Stuart Holroyd, and we began pacing one another on critical books: he began *Emergence from Chaos* and I *The Outsider*. Besides, George always returned to his comments about

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my age, and the assurance that I'd feel differently when I'd had more experience of "life." This enraged me, and made me determined not to renew our acquaintance until he could have no further excuse for this kind of patronage. When *The Outsider* was accepted, I lent him the manuscript, but he returned it months later, still unread.

I saw nothing of him for several years.

We met again recently for lunch. It was obvious within the first five minutes that the same total failure to communicate still exists. The personal element has become too strong; we react uncontrollably, like chemical compounds. The difference of temperaments makes any real discussion of ideas impossible. This is a pity, since I feel that, in many ways, he was right. I *have* changed in the six years since I first met him, although not entirely in the way he predicted. I no longer regard the Church as the necessary antithesis of modern materialism, and political freedom seems no longer so irrelevant to the question of man's absolute freedom. But the basic differences remain. I would not like to try the experiment of attending another *Bridge* meeting. George, no doubt, feels the same about me.

I was amused by a story he told me about one of the "disciples." When *The Outsider* was published, a young man who had been particularly opposed to me approached George carrying a newspaper. "You misled us about Colin. A journalist here says he's a genius. Why didn't you tell us?" George assured him gravely that the journalist was probably exaggerating. Eighteen months later, when my *Religion and the Rebel* was published, the same young man brought a copy of one of the posh weeklies to the *Bridge* meeting. "You were right about Colin. This man here says he's not a genius. I apologise for doubting your word." It is to George's credit that he pointed out that a critic in a posh weekly may be as fallible as a penny-a-liner in a low-brow daily. I hope the lesson has taught the disciple to think for himself.

History

A dandelion's head erect
howls in the tortured intellect,
a cloud can murder men and press
whole armies into feebleness,
the smell of hyacinth drunk in
is the revolution's origin.

Two crickets creaking in the grass
can freeze the continental mass,
one vixen round her litter curled
can freeze to death an age of the world,
zoo goats on an artificial crag
are the revolutionary flag.

And the fierce puma and the hot ape
pull their own entrails out of shape,
and the young lovers whose sun
is an absolutely perfect one
deliver over seas and lands
to the violent dead with bloody hands.

Peter Levi, S.J.

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R. H. S. Crossman

The Spectre of Revisionism

A Reply to Crosland

"A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Revisionism. Mr. Gaitskell is not alone."

How characteristic that Mr. Anthony Crosland should start his pronunciamento in last month's ENCOUNTER by a facetious comparison with Karl Marx! His bantering allusion to the *Communist Manifesto* expresses pretty faithfully the mixture of Bohemian flippancy and economic punditry with which he has been conducting his campaign for modernising the Labour Party. Mr. Crosland concluded his book, *The Future of Socialism*, with a plea that British Socialists should cease to be drab and should cultivate gaiety and liveliness. It is ironical that the effect of his Revisionist Manifesto has been to plunge us back into a dreary doctrinal argument which is depressing the Labour Party and boring the general public to distraction.

I

THE most recent definition of Revisionism was given by Mr. Crosland in last month's ENCOUNTER.

> The Labour Party should have one overriding aim over the next three years: to adapt itself, without in any way surrendering basic principles, to the realities of social change, and to present itself to the electorate in a mid-20th-century guise.

This comment by Mr. Richard Crossman, M.P. for Coventry and Vice-Chairman of the Labour Party's National Executive, opens a discussion of the Crosland article, "THE FUTURE OF THE LEFT," *which we published last month in the March number of* ENCOUNTER.

But what form should the adaptation take and what should be the guise—or disguise—in which the Labour Party should represent itself in the 1960's? I have read and re-read *The Future of the Left* and can only discover one concrete proposal, a revision of the Party Constitution in order to remove any suggestion that it is committed either to wholesale nationalisation or to further nationalisation of whole industries. Mr. Crosland has no difficulty in showing that practically the whole leadership of the Labour Party —including Mr. Bevan, Mrs. Castle, Mr. Mikardo, and myself—has long since avowedly abandoned wholesale nationalisation as an objective. But he believes that the Party militants still blindly adhere to it, largely owing to the influence of "the Left-wing leaders who intellectually accept a mixed economy but still cling to the dogma of wholesale public ownership." These Left-wing leaders, according to Mr. Crosland, can rely on the wording of the Party Constitution because "the extremist phraseology of the Party's formal aims bears no relation to the moderate practical content of its short-term programme." And so he reaches his conclusion that the Constitution must be re-written and that anyone who opposes this is suffering from "schizophrenia."

Alas! The "fact" on which his whole argument depends is an un-fact. The "extremist phraseology" of the Party Constitution quite simply does not exist. Here is the actual wording of the relevant clause.

> CLAUSE IV—PARTY OBJECTS
>
> (4) To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common owner-

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> ship of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

The more I study this formula, the more admiration I feel for Sidney Webb and Arthur Henderson, who drafted it in 1918. At the Blackpool Conference Mr. Gaitskell urged us to distinguish Socialist ends from Socialist means and to recognise nationalisation as a means. This is just what Clause 4 does. First it distinguishes the Socialist end—the end of exploitation and the most equitable distribution of the fruits of our labours—from the organisation of the economy through which this can best be accomplished. Next it defines the two essential features of the Socialist economy which alone can achieve the Socialist end of equitable distribution. The first of these features is not nationalisation but common ownership, and to this is added a second—"the best obtainable system of popular administration and control"—a rather vague phrase, which at least rejects as non-Socialist the kind of nationalised Board, responsible neither to Parliament nor to its workers, which was set up by the Attlee Government. I can see that Mr. Herbert Morrison, whose brain-child these Boards were, could object to Clause 4 as it stands. But Mr. Crosland's case for re-writing it falls, for the conclusive reason that this clause does not commit Labour either to wholesale nationalisation or to further nationalisation of whole industries and contains none of the "extremist phraseology" which he strangely attributes to it.

Must we be content, therefore, with the Party's present attitude to nationalisation? On the contrary, we should find a new and radical approach to this topic, based on a ruthless critique of the nationalisation undertaken by the Attlee Government. For the public discredit into which public ownership has fallen is very largely due to the disregard of Socialist principle with which whole industries have been subjected to management by remote, centralised Boards, which Parliament is expressly forbidden to investigate or control. Unfortunately, before 1945, the Labour Party had done very little advanced planning and there were no blueprints ready, showing how the industries due for nationalisation were to be organised. Since the detailed job of applying Socialism to the coal-mines, the railways, etc., was left to the civil servants in the Ministries, it is hardly surprising that what we got were not socialised industries but centralised, bureaucratic State monopolies. The nationalised Board—neither a public enterprise responsible to Parliament nor yet an efficient profit-making monopoly—is a hybrid, neither fish nor fowl. It can be made to work fairly satisfactorily in certain public services, such as gas, electricity, and atomic energy. But it is a monstrous burden on most productive industries. So the proper way to counter public hostility to nationalisation is not to re-write Clause 4 but to admit frankly the dreadful mistakes made by the Attlee Government and then to work out precise proposals for nationalising the nationalised industries, decentralising their oligarchies and subjecting them to full public control.

II

IT WOULD be silly to imagine, however, that, having disposed of the case for revising Clause 4, one has finished with Revisionism. The influence Mr. Crosland wields—far greater outside than inside the Labour Party—derives less from his particular proposals than from his new philosophy of Socialism—or, if you prefer it, his revised "Social Democratic" outlook. This has been received enthusiastically by the whole press, including the Top People who write *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Economist*. Among non-Socialists, indeed, there is virtual unanimity that, unless his ideas are accepted by the Labour leadership—not so much as a specific body of concrete proposals but as a general philosophy of life—the outlook for the Labour Party is dim.

What exactly is Mr. Crosland's up-to-date Socialism? The attempt to summarise a view with which one disagrees is always dangerous. I have tried, however, to be scrupulously fair in listing what seem to me the essential features of his Revisionism.

(1) *Economic*. Since full employment can now be maintained by regulating a free-enterprise system, the old-fashioned Socialist analysis of the contradictions of capitalism is no longer valid. Socialists must now admit the Government won the election because they successfully maintained both full employment and stable prices, as well as achieving a rapid increase in living standards, contrasted with the austerity of life under the Labour Government. The only safe assumption is that the next election will be fought under at least as favourable, if not more favourable, economic conditions.

(2) *Social*. Rising living standards are rapidly undermining the class-conscious solidarity which

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used to cement the Labour Movement. More and more workers dislike business-men less than they dislike trade union leaders, and vote Conservative because they don't want to feel themselves members of the working class.

(3) *Electoral.* One result of increasing prosperity is to reduce the real differences between the two big parties and so to make it even more important to present the right image to the electorate. To regain working-class votes, Labour must remove the image of austerity and the fear that a Labour Government would upset the prosperity people are now enjoying. With these obstacles out of the way, the swing of the pendulum should bring it to office.

(4) *International.* Socialist doubts about revisionism should be removed by the knowledge that most members of the Socialist International, including the Dutch, Swedes, Swiss, Austrians, and Germans—not to mention the Australians, New Zealanders, and the CCF in Canada—have all accepted the new philosophy. It is a sign of insularity that the British Labour Party is "a bit to the rear of the column."

III

Let me admit at once that Revisionism faithfully reflects the political mood of Britain during the last eight years. But is it an adequate Socialist philosophy for the decade which lies ahead? Mr. Crosland is impatient of anyone who even asks the question. He is sure that we must dismiss the idea of the coming crisis, accept the Affluent Society, and try to make it more just and equitable. It is here that we part company. I believe that we must give warning of the crisis ahead and condemn the Affluent Society as incapable of coping with it. I also believe that, by preaching this austere doctrine now, when its apparent irrelevance makes us unpopular, we shall win public confidence as history goes our way.

There are two reasons why I hold this view. One is practical and concerned with electoral tactics. The other is theoretical and concerned with the shape of things to come.

Assume for the moment that the Revisionist predictions are correct—by 1964 people will be even more prosperous and contented than they are to-day. In these circumstances Mr. Crosland expects Labour to win, if only it will remove from its image those distasteful features—including the commitment to further nationalisation—which prevent the swing of the pendulum. This hope seems to me to be based on a misjudgment of the electorate and a mis-reading of history. What we have seen since the beginning of the century has not been an in-and-out of two big parties, as the pendulum swings to and fro, but long periods of Right-wing rule, with an occasional swing to the Left when something goes badly wrong. As a nation, we normally accept the Tory Establishment and only put the Left into power when it is time for a big change. Mr. Crosland assumes this condemns us to "impotent opposition." Oh dear! how can he fail to see that in a period of complacent prosperity, a vigorous Socialist Opposition will have far more power for good than a weak Labour Government with a small majority.

There is another factor to be considered. Leaders seek to change the inmost nature of their parties at dire peril. The Labour Party was founded as a movement of moral protest, which denounced the capitalist *status quo* and preached the need for a Socialist transformation of society. To tell our party workers that the need for a Socialist transformation has been eliminated, and that the leadership must now show it can manage a mixed economy as well as the Tories, will destroy the morale of the rank-and-file without regaining the confidence of the electorate. Those who believe that what the country needs is an alternative Government, as distinct from a radical Opposition, should found a new party or revive Liberalism.

One of the curious features of the present controversy is that the leading Revisionists—Mr. Crosland, Mr. Roy Jenkins, and Mr. Douglas Jay—are all professional economists of note. Yet the expert advice they have proffered since last October has been almost exclusively concerned with mass psychology, electoral tactics, and propaganda techniques. This at least disproves the accusation that economists are "desiccated calculating machines!" As an old-time professional propagandist, however, I am scared stiff by the obsession they reveal with the techniques of "winning friends and influencing people." Mr. Crosland, for example, tells us that the "one overriding aim of the Labour Party over the next three years should be to adapt itself . . . and to present itself in a mid-20th-century guise." "*The one overriding aim.*" If there is one thing I learnt from five years of psychological warfare, it is that the best propaganda consists in apparently doing no propaganda at all. An Opposition which spent three years in dolling itself up to woo the electorate would condemn itself to certain defeat. The voters would learn to despise it

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and its members would lose their last shred of self-respect. What makes Revisionism a vote-loser is its obsession with winning votes.

How, then, should the Opposition conduct itself in these next four years? The best way to regain the confidence of the British people is, first of all, to regain our own self-respect. Instead of veering with every gust of popular opinion; instead of watering down policies in order to paper over differences inside the Party or avoid offending an important interest; instead of pulling punches for fear of upsetting the Establishment; instead of behaving as the public contemptuously expects every politician to behave—instead of all this, we should make ourselves thoroughly unpopular by harrying the Establishment, warning the country of the troubles that lie ahead, and showing how they can only be overcome by a further advance towards Socialism. The best way for an Opposition to survive a period of unpopularity is to stand by its principles—in the confidence that history will prove it right.

IV

HAVING dealt with the practical objections to Revisionism, I must now turn to consider its theoretical inadequacies. If we were to see the world through Mr. Crosland's eyes, would this help us to understand the post-war era and anticipate the shape of things to come?

In order to adapt our Socialism to the mid-20th-century, we need first and foremost a new critique—a successor to *Das Kapital*—which expounds the working of the new, regulated capitalist economies and exposes their new inadequacies and contradictions. Naturally, anyone who undertakes this task will be attacked, as Karl Marx was, by every banker and economic pundit. Nevertheless, the job has been started—in this country by Thomas Balogh and in America by John Kenneth Galbraith, author of *The Affluent Society*. What saddens me about Mr. Crosland is that, instead of joining in the assault on economic orthodoxy, he seems to be advising the Labour Party to come to terms with it. Whereas, for example, *The Affluent Society* mercilessly exposes the vulgarity, the wastefulness, the incompetence, and the inherent contradictions of Western capitalism, Mr. Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* is chiefly concerned to emphasise its stability and strength. He also seems strangely unaware of the threat to freedom presented by the irresponsible concentrations of power which characterise the modern oligopoly.

My second criticism of Mr. Crosland's outlook is that, although he dubs the rest of us "insular," he himself displays a most curious provincialism. In the whole of *The Future of the Left* there is no mention of what is happening outside the North Atlantic area, apart from vague references to aid for underdeveloped areas and colonial equality. He talks a great deal about the stability of the post-war economy and the increase in national wealth under the Tories since 1951, but does not mention that this latter has been mainly caused by a fortunate improvement of our terms of trade. As a result of these gaps in his analysis, he sees only the negative factors which have caused public ownership to become increasingly unpopular since 1945, and completely overlooks the new factors which may completely change that attitude in the next ten years. Mr. Crosland urges the Labour Party to follow the example of the Dutch, Swedish, Swiss, Austrian, and West German Socialists. What he does not mention is that the Swedish Socialist Party—after a long bout of Revisionism—faces the gravest crisis in its history and that the Austrians have for fifteen years shared power quite happily with their anti-Socialist opponents, while the Dutch, the Swedes, the Swiss, and the Germans are minority parties, without any real hope of ever carrying out a Socialist programme.

What strikes me is Mr. Crosland's failure to observe the terrifying contrast between the drive and missionary energy displayed by the Communist bloc and the lethargic, comfortable indolence of the Western democracies. Revisionism assumes that the expansion of our Affluent Society will continue at a comfortable pace, until gradually the whole world, including Soviet Russia, has accepted its values and admitted that a nation's greatness is measured by the number of washing-machines and motor-cars per head of population. I suggest we should make a very different assumption—that the whole Western world will face a grave crisis as the balance of power shifts and the countries which rely on planning and nationalisation catch up on our rich and easy-going economies.

Mr. Crosland rightly sees that this crisis is unlikely to take the old-fashioned form of mass unemployment—and wrongly concludes that there will be no crisis at all. Thus he fails to observe both the new conflicts and the new solutions, such as have already emerged under de Gaulle since the collapse of the Fourth

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Republic and such as may well recur in India when Nehru dies.

At present the American Administration and the British Government are nearly as complacent and blind to these new factors as Mr. Crosland himself. But history will force them on our attention, as the Communist countries demonstrate with ever increasing force the efficiency of nationalisation. Progressively year by year we shall see that, judged in terms of national security, scientific and technological development, popular education, and, finally, even of mass living standards, free enterprise is losing out in the peaceful competition between East and West. It would be strange indeed for the Labour Party to abandon its belief in the central importance of public ownership at the precise moment when the superiority of socialised economies is being triumphantly vindicated in world affairs.

The Tories have an obvious reply. They say that the Kremlin's brutal power derives not from public ownership but from the one-party State. A dictator can boost defence and welfare services at the cost of personal consumption. But this is an excuse which no Socialist can accept. To concede that dictatorship is intrinsically more efficient than democracy is to admit defeat before the race begins. Indeed, our whole Democratic Socialist case is surely based on the contention that those who combine planning *and* free choice, social discipline *and* civil liberty, a strong Executive *and* independent justice, are not only better but stronger than their totalitarian adversaries. I fully realise that, for some time to come, abandonment of public ownership will be urged upon the Labour Party by all the best people; and that those who predict a crisis of Western democracy and warn that it can only be cured by a radical advance towards Socialism will make many enemies in a political climate as complacent and short-sighted as that of the 1930's. But they are the kind of enemies the Labour Party needs to make if it is to become once again a fighting Opposition.

V

A few words, in conclusion, about the background and the probable outcome of the Revisionist controversy. When Mr. Hugh Gaitskell took over from Mr. Clement Attlee, the Labour Party had been tearing itself to pieces for several years. So the new Leader decided to staunch its wounds with twelve wads of Socialist re-thinking, each packed into a bulky policy document. We all agreed to stop the abstract Left-Right argument about public ownership and instead to seek agreement on practical measures which a Labour Government could carry out if elected to power. Both Gaitskellites and Bevanites showed a surprising readiness to make concessions of abstract principle and accept practical compromises in order to achieve a workable agreement.

The result of this cessation of doctrinal feuding was highly beneficial. We not only evolved a policy for the next Labour Government and a programme for the general election; we also began to heal those personal hatreds and clique rivalries which had been turning the word "comrade" into a term of abuse. To the surprise of its friends as well as its opponents, the Labour Party last autumn went into the election campaign with a united leadership and a volunteer organisation more numerous and more enthusiastic than at any time since 1945. Even the unexpected extent of the Tory victory did not impair either the prestige Mr. Gaitskell had richly earned during the campaign or the renewed fervour of those who had flocked to support him.

It is against this background that we must view the decision of the Revisionists that the morrow of defeat was the right moment to call for a retreat from nationalisation. Mr. Crosland is either very innocent or a little disingenuous when he expresses surprise that his own, Mr. Jay's, and Mr. Jenkins' declarations caused such a furore. Did they really believe that steel nationalisation would be joyfully jettisoned by rank-and-file Socialists as soon as Mr. Jay gave the word? Did they seriously assume that, by applying shock tactics in the moment of defeat, they could jerk the wheels of the party machine into Revisionist ruts? If they did, they must be sadly disconcerted by what happened. The Labour Party was shocked not into an acceptance of their proposals but into a cold, frustrated anger at the prospect of another long, dreary period of doctrinal feuding. Since then the Revisionists have been hastily retreating towards orthodoxy. In their flight they have jettisoned nearly all their concrete proposals, until, as we have seen, all that remains of their programme is the single proposition that Clause 4 of the Constitution should be revised.

If Mr. Crosland is right and Revisionism is indeed "a spectre haunting Europe," it looks as though in Britain it is a ghost that will be laid without too much trouble.

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Constantine FitzGibbon

Auschwitz

and the Camp Commandant

RUDOLF HOESS, the SS officer who built, and for several years was commandant of, Auschwitz, the largest Nazi extermination camp, had a career that was not a-typical of many senior Nazis. Of middle-class origin, he served at a very young age in the First World War, in which he had a distinguished record. An excessively strict father had destined the boy for the priesthood, but by the time he returned from service in the Middle East, his father was dead and he had lost his faith. He volunteered for one of the *Freikorps* and served both in the East and in Germany proper during the early years of the Weimar Republic. Like so many *Freikorps* officers, he was a violent anti-democrat. He was involved in a political murder, was convicted, and in 1924 was sentenced to ten years in prison. Released in 1928, he joined a cranky, back-to-the-land movement, the "Atamanen," to which many Nazis including Heinrich Himmler belonged.

In 1933 he joined the SS, and in the following year went to Dachau as a guard. Thanks to his friendship with Himmler and also, it seems, to the meticulous thoroughness with which he carried out his duties, he secured fairly rapidly promotion in the Concentration Camp service at Dachau and at Sachsenhausen. When in 1940 it was decided to set up a huge new concentration camp in German-occupied Poland, at Oswiecim (Auschwitz), Hoess was ordered to build it (using slave labour, of course), and became its first commandant. He remained there until the summer of 1943, that is to say until approximately half-way through the mass extermination of the Jews. Despite what he says in his autobiography,[1] he was an exceptionally brutal commandant, and survivors of Auschwitz have said that conditions there improved under his successors. From Auschwitz he went to the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps at SS headquarters in Berlin. At the end of the war he disappeared, and was only captured (by the British Field Security Police) in the spring of 1946. After appearing at Nuremberg, he was handed over to the Poles. He was tried and condemned to death. While awaiting trial, he was ordered to write his autobiography. This he did, apparently quite willingly. Indeed, he says that he enjoyed composing this memorandum of his life's work. He always enjoyed hard work, he maintains, and since he saw little wrong in what he had done, he seems to have derived considerable satisfaction from his literary labours.

In 1947 he was taken back to Auschwitz, and there hanged upon a gallows especially built so that the last sight to meet his eyes would be the camp he had created and administered, and in which he had sent millions of innocent people to their death. Apart from Auschwitz he can, as his autobiography makes utterly plain, have little claim on our interest. Therefore it is important to remember what Auschwitz was.

LOOKING at it across the years, the predominant impression is one of screaming insanity. But it is an insanity of a very special sort. We think of madmen as exceptions, as pitiful individuals inhabiting a world where the overwhelming majority is not mad and which is

[1] Which I translated from the German. It has recently been published under the title *Commandant of Auschwitz* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

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itself fundamentally sane. We may remember descriptions of the bedlams of the 18th century. But even those disgusting and terrifying places were so because they were exceptional, as a zoo is exceptional: all around them life went on in what was, and is, regarded as a normal manner. But Auschwitz, and indeed the greater part of the *monde concentrationnaire*, was an insane world, into which sane people were thrown, there to be tortured and killed and themselves driven mad. If that world resembles anything, it resembles the visions of hell that diseased minds created from a decadent Christianity in the cruel Gothic age: a hell in which fiends, themselves damned, inflicted endless, pointless sufferings of a horrible ingenuity upon defenceless souls guilty of some technical crime or misdemeanour in their lifetime or, on occasion, guilty of nothing at all, save perhaps the fact of preferring an alternative church ritual. Such souls, the medieval psychopaths in priests' clothing told their terrified congregations of ignorant peasants, are forever writhing in unquenchable flames, are forked by howling demons into lakes of burning pitch, are objects which can henceforth feel nothing save pain. Yet there is one essential and never-to-be-forgotten difference. The organised sadism of the Middle Ages was in general played out in the world of fantasy. There were, of course, exceptions, such as the murders and tortures organised by the Dominicans under the name of the Inquisition, and the hideous crimes that took place during the Wars of Religion. In these the fantasy was realised. But, in general, hell was only a concept of sick and psychotic minds imposed upon minds that were inferior and incapable of resistance.

Auschwitz was not a spiritual phenomenon. Here it was bodies, not souls, that were beaten and starved and befouled and burned. And any man who, like Hoess, maintains that mental torment is worse than physical agony and death is either a liar or else has no idea of what he is saying, is in fact a fool.[2] Auschwitz was hell on earth, which is the only sort of hell there is. And of course every possible refinement of mental and spiritual torture was there practised on the prisoners as well.

WHEN I first visited the site of Auschwitz in the spring of 1958, a Frenchwoman who had been in there for several years said to me: "It must be worse for you to visit this place than for us to revisit it." Perhaps her kind and sensitive words were true. For her it was perhaps only a deserted spot, nothing now but a dirty stain upon the flat and tragic countryside of southern Poland, where once, as she knew, hell had stood. For me, even though I had read a great deal about it, even though I had seen foul and shocking things in war, even though I thought I knew in theory how disgusting humanity can be, this place was quite unspeakably horrible, even deserted, even mostly burned down, even with the grass growing again between the huts that still stand there. Let me try to describe it, first as it is to-day.

The nucleus of the camp—Auschwitz I—is an old Polish cavalry barracks, two dozen three-storey rectangular brick buildings, some of which were built by the Germans on what had been the parade-ground, so that there was no open space; and these now house the administrative offices—for the camp is a public monument, a memorial—and the museum, while others stand empty. Over the gate through the wire is the metal placard on which the words ARBEIT MACHT FREI are written. Inside the gate, and half underground, is a small gas-chamber. It was too small, and its use was soon discontinued. All round the stone buildings is the high wire fence, which was electrified, supported on concrete stands some twelve feet high that curve inwards at the top. Barbed wire also bisects the camp in each direction. These wire entanglements are topped by strong floodlights, with a watchtower at every corner where the SS-man sat behind his machine-gun. It is all quite small, perhaps an acre or two at the most, including the execution yard and the punishment block, of which the windows are still boarded up. It is silent, and it stinks. This is not a figure of speech. The buildings stink of death. Even after fifteen years the bricks and stone floors of these deserted barracks exude a faint, sweetish odour. I have smelt this smell before. After the American and Canadian armies had killed a great many Germans between Mortain and Falaise in Normandy I flew over the battlefield in a small

[2] Hoess says, when writing of his own imprisonment: "Every prisoner who lives a sensitive inner life suffers far more from unjustified, malicious, and deliberate acts of spite, in a word, from acts of mental cruelty, than ever he does from the physical equivalent. Such acts produce a far more ignominious and oppressive effect than does corporal maltreatment" (p. 55).

Writing of Dachau, he says (p. 67): "There were also plenty of SS-men who regarded the sight of corporal punishment being inflicted as an excellent spectacle, a kind of peasant merry-making."

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liaison plane. I smelt it there, high above the corpses. But at Auschwitz it was the ghost of a smell, comparable perhaps to the tinkle of a glass broken far away, faint but all-pervading.

A mile or so outside the wire of Auschwitz I is Auschwitz II, or Auschwitz-Birkenau. This is visually very different. In the first place, where Auschwitz I is close and cramped, and seems dark even at mid-day, Auschwitz II is vast and open. The main gate, through which under a great arch surmounted by a high watchtower run the railway lines and the road, rears up out of the swampy plain, the only tall building. The railway line runs straight for a half-mile to its end, and this was also the end for most of the freight it bore from all four corners of Europe, for the line stops between the gas-chambers and the crematoria. To the left of the railway line is the women's camp, which is still standing, scores of low, single-storey hutments. These huts were modelled on German military field-stables, each about a hundred feet long, thirty feet wide, eight feet high, and with no windows. They have no ceilings, only slate roofs laid above bare beams. They were supposed to house 300 women each. Sometimes they contained 1,000 or 1,200. On the other side stretches away a forest of brick chimneys; the men's camp was burned and only the chimneys remain, as far as the eye can see, line after line of them, for here there were over one hundred and fifty of these stables for men. And beyond is yet another camp, uncompleted, where stood another hundred and fifty huts. Auschwitz was being enlarged until the end. Yet a third huge area of huts was to be constructed beyond the women's camp. And these areas are cut up and cut off from one another by wire, the omnipresent, electrified, floodlit, barbed wire. Here was the Czech camp, this the Gipsy camp, here is where the property of the murdered Jews was stacked and sorted. It is a vast city of chimneys. As many as a hundred and fifty thousand people lived here, briefly. Millions, perhaps as many as four millions, died down there, at the end of the railway lines, where crouch the squat ruins of the gas-chambers and crematoria. There are five of these huge edifices, each equal in size to a London tube station. Grass grows, there are rank flowers, too, among the wire, and over it all is the pale, Polish sky.

"I came to hate the sky," a former inmate of the camp told me, "I came to hate it."

This was the death camp. And beyond its wire, out of sight, are the other thirty-odd sub-camps, the labour camps where lived the slaves who worked in the factories that *IG Farben* and others built here. And then there are the comfortable, well-spaced, well-heated barracks where the SS guards slept. And the house which was the SS officers' mess, where I saw washing hanging on the line, and Polish children playing in the dusty front garden. And the cottage that was made air-tight for the gassing of the Russian prisoners of war who built the first huts of Auschwitz II. And the dirty, untidy, unpainted little town of Oswiecim, which the Germans called Auschwitz and which gave the whole place its name. People live there, have lived there throughout. They did not look like other people, living in other little country towns. They work in the factories the Germans built. And at Auschwitz II, Auschwitz-Birkenau, the wind whistles very faintly through the wire where the railway lines lead to nothingness.

IF THAT description gives any idea of what Auschwitz is like to-day, then to imagine what it was in the early 1940s all this desolation must be crammed with people, with human bodies, some living, some dying, and some dead, a perpetual, continual, well-nigh unbearable overcrowding as of the London tube or the New York subway during the rush-hour: and this cramming and jamming and struggling going on all day and every day, affecting every aspect of physical life. Crowds fighting for a drop of water from taps that barely drip; crowds fighting for a few moments' use of the primitive closets already running over with excrement; five or six men attempting to share one blanket in the depths of a Polish winter; starving crowds fighting for their food and, in the end, sometimes overturning the whole vat of watery soup, to the amusement of the guards; crowds of women trying to find their clothes in the darkness of their huts when suddenly ordered to parade, and, not infrequently, being set upon by Alsatian dogs; crowds of the dying, too many for the mock-hospital; crowds of corpses, too many even for the massive incinerators; crowds, everywhere crowds, being screamed at and struck and harried by the supervisors and guards, and always, save in some of the torture-chambers, the sight and sound and smell of these huge masses of human beings, the great majority of them starving, filthy, and sick. So constant was the shuffling of feet between the huts, that in all those square miles no blade of grass grew.

Next must be added the back-breaking work

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and the endlessly protracted roll-calls, standing to attention for hours on end in driving snow or dust or rain, and so the perpetual physical exhaustion on top of the exhaustion of starvation.

Then the fear and omnipresence of death, the greasy smoke pouring day and night from the crematoria; the prevailing wind carried the stink of burning flesh across the women's camp.

Then the terror of the *Kapos*, those real criminals, usually men convicted of crimes of violence or sex, who were in charge of the male inmates, or the convicted prostitutes who controlled the women's camps. It was with these criminals that the people thrown into the camp came most in contact, who plundered, bullied, screamed at and tortured them most directly, both in the huts and out at work. (In other Nazi Concentration Camps the *Kapos* were Communists: but whether Communists or criminals, they were invariably German nationals, most of whom were in these camps from 1933 to 1945 and who created a powerful hierarchy.)

And behind the *Kapos* the ever-present and terrifying whims of the SS, who would finish off a dying man outside his hut by thrusting the ferrule of a walking-stick down his throat; who would create the finest symphony orchestra in the world from the Jewish musicians in the camp, and compel this orchestra to play stale dance-music for ten, twelve, fifteen hours on end; who would set their dogs on the women; who would order the prisoners to entertain them by performing sexual orgies, while they drank and watched; who would throw a prisoner's cap into the forbidden zone by the wire, order him to retrieve it, and shoot him whether he did or not. The catalogue is endless.

Such, very briefly, is what life in Auschwitz was like. This was the world, it must be remembered, which Hoess created, over which he presided, in which he had absolute power. It was a place of madness.[3]

A CONCENTRATION camp partakes of the nature of a prison, in that the inmates are deprived of their freedom, but otherwise it is well-nigh its opposite. A prison cuts a man off from the life of his fellows, and that is the principal punishment. A camp hurls him into a mass of humanity, from which he can never, even for a moment, escape. The symbol for a prison is a smooth blank wall; for a camp, a strand of wire, hiding nothing, revealing everything. A prison is silence, a camp hideous noise; a prison is solitude, a camp its opposite; a prison deprives man of human company, a camp makes humanity hateful to the prisoner. In a prison there is the grinding boredom of life regulated down to the most minute detail; in a camp anything, that is to say anything unpleasant or terrifying or disgusting, can happen at any moment. A prison is sense reduced to its most humdrum and prosaic flatness; a camp is insanity exacerbated to a screeching, agonising pitch. And there is one other and vital distinction. Most men who are sent to prison, and are to a certain extent transformed into objects at the mercy of the authorities, have committed a crime; even though some of them may not regard what brought them there as a criminal act, it is made plain to them, during their trial and in their prison, that society does. The inmates of the concentration camps, and particularly of Auschwitz, were, in the overwhelming instance, guilty of nothing whatsoever. They were transformed into objects to be starved, mishandled, murdered, and burned, not because of anything that they had done, but because of what they were. Furthermore the majority had no reason to believe that what they were, or had been when free, was in any way inferior to the average of society; and it was certainly superior to the nature of the *Kapos* and SS-men whose objects they now became.

THE Nazi concentration camps fulfilled a number of functions of varying importance, and sometimes mutually contradictory, not all of which were primarily concerned with the inmates themselves. In the first place, and particularly in the early days of the Nazi revolution, they were places of segregation, torture, and, to a very limited extent, re-education.

As certain Germans are never weary of repeating, the modern concentration camp is "a British invention," dating from the Boer War, when Boers, including women and children, were rounded up and placed in camps, for military reasons—lest they assist their compatriots, but also and undoubtedly for the purpose of punishing and terrorising the population. These camps were often disgusting places, and many

[3] Readers who might wish to know more about that insane hell are advised to read Eugen Kogon's *The Theory and Practice of Hell: the German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* (Secker & Warburg, 1956); Dr. Elie A. Cohen's *Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp* (W. W. Norton, 1953), or *Tragédies de la Déportation*, 1940–45, ed. Olga Wormser and Henri Michel (Hachette, 1954).

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Boers—a monument in South Africa is said to give the figure of 30,000 out of a total population of 1,500,000—died in them. This is not an incident of which the British have any right to be, or, so far as I know, are proud. Their only excuse is that they were fighting a war of aggression against an extremely patriotic and united population, and that such measures perhaps shortened the war's duration.

The Nazis always pretended that their demagogic vote-catching was somehow a military campaign, and that their political enemies, in particular the Communists, were military ones too. As soon as they had achieved power, they proceeded to round up, intern, and torture or kill such enemies. They could and did pretend that these were dangerous men who had to be segregated lest their machinations overthrow the Hitlerian régime. However, their prime motive, in so far as the prisoners went, was undoubtedly revenge. It was to house these enemies that the first concentration camps, Dachau, Columbiahau, and Oranienburg, were created.

But into them they also put men who could certainly not be regarded as dangerous politically: homosexuals, professional criminals, even alcoholics and men who would not work. These were there, as were many of the politicals, technically to be "re-educated." It is on this, theoretically the most respectable of the concentration camp aims, that Hoess inevitably insists. But it should be pointed out that to use the word "education" in this sense is a typically Nazi perversion of meaning. By 1933 serious penology had reached the point at which the main purpose of imprisonment was seen less as punishment, deterrence, or even segregation than as cure or re-education. The Nazis, however, made no attempt to educate their prisoners in the generally understood meaning of that word, let alone to cure psychologically unbalanced cases. What they did was to subject their prisoners to such appalling ill-treatment that, once released, they would take very good care not to fall into the hands of the Nazi authorities again. And even this pretence of re-education was abandoned once the war began, since to all intents and purposes no prisoners were thenceforth released from the camps. It has, therefore, no relevance so far as Auschwitz is concerned.[4]

Another and far more important function of the camps from the very beginning was one in which the prisoners served only as a means: this was the terrorisation of the population outside the camps. And here I must touch on a problem that has been much discussed and has led to a great deal of misunderstanding: namely, how much did the mass of the German people know about what was going on in the camps, and to what extent were they therefore accomplices in crime? The answer is that everybody in Germany knew about the camps as places of brutal imprisonment and maltreatment, but that very few of them knew what actually happened there. This, I must remind the reader, is for the period before the mass exterminations, which began in 1941 (and of which I shall write later). The Nazi government wished the people to know that any disobedience would be cruelly punished. But, being in some respects excellent psychologists, they realised that by leaving the exact details vague, in fact by giving the imaginations of the people a free rein, the terror would be increased even beyond that which could be aroused by revealing the truth of what went on in the camps. Whenever, therefore, a man was released from a concentration camp—and at least a million Germans passed through them in the 1930s—he had to swear never to divulge what he had seen. Should he break this oath, he knew the fate that awaited him. He usually kept his mouth shut. Furthermore, this policy of quasi-secrecy permitted the Nazi government to pretend abroad that the camps were simply places of internment or enlarged prisons. But the Germans knew: they did not know quite what, but they knew, and those who might have resisted were frightened, and obeyed. And another result of this fear, of this playing on the imagination, and of their seeing the silent, broken men released from the camps, was that they knew it was wiser not to know too much. That is terrorism in action. It is practised with greater or less success by every totalitarian state, and is indeed perhaps the infallible hallmark of 20th-century despotism in large countries.

[4] As Hannah Arendt points out in her brilliant study of totalitarianism, *The Burden of Our Time* (Secker & Warburg, 1951), the real concentration camp terror did not begin either in Germany or in Russia until the régimes were fully established and no longer had need to fear any internal opposition: that is to say, approximately in 1935 and 1930 respectively. Only then were the mass arrest, torture, and murder of totally innocent categories (Jews and Kulaks) begun, people who—unlike the Communists in Germany or the old ruling class in Russia—were obviously and utterly incapable of constituting a threat to the state. Her explanation of why this was done—too complicated to be summarised in a footnote—is of profound importance to an understanding of the nature of totalitarianism.

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A secondary purpose of the brutality inside the camps, and again one in which the prisoners were only a means to an end, was the demoralisation, in the first sense of that word, of their SS guards. By making the SS-men into accomplices in crime, into damned souls, Himmler and Heydrich and Eicke believed that they would bind them forever to the Nazi chariot. They were successful. Hoess has a considerable amount to say about this process, which he calls "hardening" and of which he pretends to disapprove.[5] But it does raise this point: everybody connected with the camp system was a victim, primarily of course the inmates, but to a less though considerable extent the entire population of Germany and, from another point of view, the guards. In this realised hell, as in the imaginary one, everyone was damned, tortured and torturers, and spectators as well.

There was one other prime purpose of the camps, of all the camps, which must be mentioned, and that is degradation. The Nazis talked a great deal about being supermen, perverting in their usual fashion the complex ideas of Nietzsche and Stefan George. But superior to what? The answer came back: the Jews. So far so good, and a well-fed member of the lower middle-class who had joined the SA or SS might well regard himself as superior to a Jewish old-clothesman from Ruthenia who could scarcely speak German. He might even be persuaded—for human beings can, and on occasion do, believe almost anything—that the possession of flaxen hair and a straight nose was somehow "better" than an aquiline nose and black hair. But could he really believe that he, the half-educated man in the brown or black shirt, was absolutely better than the well-dressed Jewish doctor who lived up the street, that his tow-headed wife was absolutely the superior of the beautiful Jewish actress he had seen at the cinema, that his boring beer-hall acquaintances were supermen compared to Einstein or Heine or Freud or even the Jewish lawyer or journalist he had once met? It was hard, even for the SS. Therefore their prisoners, whether Jews or political enemies, must be degraded to the point at which they almost ceased to appear human to their tormentors, who would then feel all the more free to torture and degrade these inhuman objects even further. A man's humanity is what distinguishes him from the animals. Starve him, beat him, and terrify him down to an animal level and, saints and other such fantastic and admirable exceptions apart, he will, temporarily at least, cease to appear a man. His torturer has thus proved that he is "superior" to the object he has created out of what once was a human being. Then, as at Auschwitz, drive this captive to perform on his fellow-prisoners those same tortures he has learned to suffer at the hands of his guards—which most men will do, to save or prolong their lives—and the degradation and consequent sensation of superiority are almost or entirely complete.

I HAVE spoken earlier of the great crowds. It must now be added that the crowds were largely composed of people who had been temporarily so degraded as to be almost animals. A friend of mine, an extremely sensitive and kind-hearted American, was put in charge of one of the concentration camps liberated in 1945. He told me that after a few days he came to hate the starving, dying, filthy inmates. It was all too repulsive for pity and charity. These wretched people were, in their degradation, an insult to humanity. He had a complete nervous collapse, this healthy young man who had undertaken his duties with a real desire to help the victims of Nazism, a breakdown from which he has never entirely recovered. And it was into camps containing scores of thousands of these degraded human beings that men and women from all over Europe were sent: it was from their ever-presence that there was no escape. Hoess organised this. And, even in prison, when he was writing his autobiography, the superiority which he felt towards the people he had degraded is still apparent.[6] To engender such

[5] "It was Eicke's intention that his SS-men, by means of continuous instruction and suitable orders concerning the dangerous criminality of the inmates, should be made basically ill-disposed towards the prisoners. They were to 'treat them rough,' and to root out once and for all any sympathy they might feel for them. By such means, he succeeded in engendering in simple-natured men a hatred and antipathy for the prisoners which an outsider will find hard to imagine" (p. 79).

"The prisoners were treated harshly and were flogged for the slightest misdemeanour. Floggings were carried out in the presence of the assembled guards, with the intention of toughening up the men. In particular, recruits were regularly forced to witness these proceedings" (p. 236).

[6] Thus he comments (p. 123) unfavourably on the fact that Russian prisoners-of-war, starving to death, would kill one another for possession of each other's food and would even eat human corpses. That Jews should seek jobs that might enable them to survive also arouses his contempt. "They did their

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feelings in men like Hoess was one of the purposes of the camps.

Another purpose was exploitation. The prisoners were intended, by their work, to enrich their captors, both as an organisation—the SS made millions out of concentration camp labour, as did such firms as *IG Farben*—and as individuals: the SS officers lived high, and so did some of the *Kapos*. Hoess goes into the activities of Pohl and others in some detail, and these contradicted to a certain extent the purpose of degradation described earlier.[7] A starving, terrified, sick man does not make a particularly good labourer, any more than a horse in a similar condition proves an adequate beast of burden. The few attempts by the SS to alleviate the condition of their objects were made with only one end in view: to get more work out of them. But when this motive collided with the other motive, degradation, it almost always proved the weaker. SS headquarters and the directors of the German war effort might demand a higher productivity rate from their millions of slaves. The actual slave-drivers on the spot preferred to prove their own superiority to their victims. After all, a reasonably well-fed and hard-working labourer is not obviously and inevitably inferior to a well-fed guard.

And, finally, there was another purpose for the concentration camps, one for which they were certainly not originally intended, which only half a dozen of them were ever asked to fulfil, and in which Auschwitz was predominant: namely, the extermination of races, classes, and groups.

THE exact date at which the Nazi leaders decided to exterminate the Jews has been established with considerable accuracy from scattered and fragmentary evidence by Léon Poliakov.[8] As early as January of 1939 Hitler said, in a public speech:

> If international Jewry should succeed, in Europe or elsewhere, in precipitating nations into a world war, the result will not be a bolshevisation of Europe and a victory of Judaism, but the extermination in Europe of the Jewish race.

Translated this means that if there were to be a total war, Hitler planned to murder the Jews. The first decision to carry out this policy of genocide was probably taken tentatively in late 1940 or early 1941. However, at that date the war was still not total. A patched-up peace with Britain still seemed remotely possible, the United States were neutral, and the Soviet Union was an ally. Though the Soviet leaders were not likely to let any "sentimental" and "unrealistic" considerations for the fate of minorities affect their policy—indeed had they not in 1940 anticipated the Nazis by massacring most of their unarmed Polish officer prisoners?[9]—genocide was most unlikely to smooth the way to any understanding with the Anglo-Saxon powers. Therefore, though hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered and experiments in mass gassings were made, the implementation of this policy as a full-scale operation was postponed. It was started in the summer of 1941. It was geared up, after the entry of the United States into the war, in the spring of 1942. And finally, once American troops had landed in North Africa and it was obvious that no sort of compromise peace was thenceforth possible, it was intensified to the maximum. By the summer of 1944 it was, to all intents and purposes, completed, and European Jewry, particularly the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, had been wiped out.

best to do each other in the eye whenever they could. Each tried to wangle a little position for himself. . . . They did not hesitate to get rid of their fellow-prisoners by making false accusations against them, if this would enable them to obtain a nice, easy job. Once they had 'got somewhere' they proceeded to harry and persecute their own people quite mercilessly" (p. 132). And, describing the behaviour of the Jews about to be gassed: "As I have already frequently said, the Jews have strongly-developed family feelings. They stick together like limpets. Nevertheless, according to my observations, they lack solidarity. One would have thought that in a situation such as this they would inevitably help and protect one another. But it was quite the contrary" (p. 151).

Thus they were the inferiors of the SS, since they lacked military *Kameradschaft*. As for the gypsies whom he also murdered, "They were my best-loved prisoners—if I may put it that way" (p. 128), apparently because "they were by their nature as trusting as children" (p. 127).

[7] The exploitation of camp labour was only seriously attempted during the second half of the war, when the manpower shortage was becoming acute. Before then labour in the camps was of the "digging holes and filling them in again" sort. The knowledge that such work was entirely nonsensical added a refinement of mental torture to the appalling physical conditions in which it had to be carried out. And to do useful work is, of course, less degrading than inane and purposeless activity.

[8] See his *Harvest of Hate* (Elek Books, 1956).

[9] Joseph Czapski. *The Inhuman Land*. (Chatto & Windus, 1951.)

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Whether Auschwitz, which came into existence in the spring of 1940, was intended from the first to be an extermination camp is doubtful. In some minds, such as those of Heydrich and Eichmann, it may well have been considered as such from the very beginning. But Hoess apparently believed that he was building an "ordinary" concentration camp. On to this camp the vast apparatus of massacre was later superimposed, and at an ever-increasing tempo. This seems to have upset him: not, of course, because he felt the faintest flicker of pity for the millions of innocent people he murdered, but because this additional huge operation made it difficult for him to run the rest of his concentration camp in an "efficient" manner and according to the regulations to which he attached such importance.

Once *die Endlösung*, "the Final Solution," was under way, it became apparent to the Nazi leaders that Auschwitz was well situated for their purpose. Although tucked away in a forgotten corner of Europe, and from our point of view remote, from the Nazi viewpoint it was the very centre of the continent that they bestrode, being half-way between Narvik and Rhodes and also between Bordeaux and Stalingrad. Four main railways passed near the camp. It was a good site for an extermination centre.

Since the murder of the Jews was the most elaborate, as it was the largest, of the Nazi crimes, we are apt to think of Auschwitz in reference to that alone. However it must be pointed out that extermination became, during the war at the latest, an act of Nazi policy that was not directed solely against the Jews. The gypsies were exterminated, as were many members of that pathetic and honourable sect, Jehovah's Witnesses, and in this case certainly not for racial reasons, since most of them were purely German peasants. All Soviet commissars were marked down for death, though these, being captured singly, were usually shot as individuals and not transported to the camps. After the attempt by a group of army officers, mostly aristocrats, to overthrow the Nazi régime in the summer of 1944, Himmler, in a secret speech to the *Gauleiters* in the following month, announced his intention of annihilating the German officer-class once the war was won. Plans existed for the extermination of the Poles. And there were undoubtedly other groups marked down for destruction, in Germany, in the Eastern Territories, and in the West. It will be recalled that, in the event of Britain being occupied, it was planned to deport all males aged between 17 and 115[10]: it is by no means hard to guess where a great many of us would have ended our lives. For, and this is a vital point, Auschwitz and the other extermination camps were not built for one sole operation, the genocide of the Jews. They were intended to be a permanent feature of Hitler's Europe. In the autumn of 1944, when almost all the Jews were dead, Auschwitz was still being enlarged. The building went on until the Russians arrived. The exterminations were to continue, and crescendo. A Nazi Europe could not have existed without them.

For just as the terror of the camps was regarded as essential for the control of the German population in peacetime, so the terror of the exterminations would have been the most powerful weapon for the control of a conquered continent. Let us imagine a revolt by the Dutch and as sequel the gassing of the entire population of Holland: and Hitler contemplated this[11] in 1941. The Belgians or the Danes, or for that matter the French, would think more than twice about rebelling. And from this point of view the extermination of the Jews, whom Hitler hated, may be seen as a sort of practice, on a vast scale, for the even more monstrous massacres that would almost certainly have followed a Nazi victory. The Russians, from whom the Nazis learned so much in the realm of terrorisation, had indeed already gone in for such massive extermination of classes and peoples, and continued it after the war. How many *kulaks* died in building the White Sea Canal, or in opening up north-eastern Siberia in the 'thirties? Where are the Crimean Tartars of whom there has been no trace since 1945? And the Chinese Communists have apparently surpassed even their tutors, having killed unknown millions of people guilty of no crime save of representing a society that the new masters of China were determined to destroy root and branch. No, Auschwitz was not a single and unique event.

The facts about the Jewish genocide are so well known, and those other and perhaps worse

[10] See Peter Fleming, *Invasion 1940* (Hart-Davis, 1957).

[11] See *The Kersten Memoirs* (Hutchinson, 1956), p. 172. Himmler spoke to Kersten about a plan to "re-settle" the entire Dutch population in Eastern Poland. This was the phrase used, in public, for the mass deportation of the Jews to Auschwitz and the other concentration camps.

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ones, planned for later on or carried out by other men in Russia and China, are so obscured, that we are apt to think of the Final Solution as an unparalleled monstrosity and, as such, barely comprehensible to us. Englishmen particularly are ready to believe that it could never happen here. In existing circumstances that is of course true. But before ascribing the causes of the crime to some quality inherent in the Germans, we should remember four facts: that similar crimes have been perpetrated by non-German peoples in Eastern Europe, in Russia, and in China; that a similar policy was employed by Cromwell and other Englishmen against the Irish only three centuries ago—"Hell of Connaught," and, had he possessed the technical means available to Hitler, who can say that Cromwell would not have used them with equal effect against those sub-men, the Irish Catholics?—while conditions below hatches for the sub-human Africans in the 18th-century slavers must have closely resembled those prevailing in the Auschwitz field-stables; that if we ascribe some special quality of evil to the Germans, we are guilty of the same moral error that they committed, with such horrible results, towards the Jews; and, finally, that if from our point of view it was a "German" crime, from an African or Asian one it was a "European" crime, and that we too are Europeans.[12] Furthermore, it is sadly certain that neither the United Kingdom nor the United States did everything in their power to help the condemned Jews escape from Hitler's Europe: the British because of their Palestine policy, the Americans because of their policy concerning immigration.[13] This of course does not alter the fact that the concentration camps with which we are here concerned, and in particular Auschwitz, were created, administered, and exploited by Germans and Austrians; that they served the German war effort; and that, with the possible exception of the labour and extermination camps in the Soviet Union, they are beyond dispute the greatest shame that any great, civilised, European country has brought upon itself and upon our continent in modern times.[14] The Germans did it. But how far were they, as a nation, responsible? The simplest way in which this question can be, and usually is, phrased is this: how much did the Germans know about the exterminations?

Though the question is simple, the answer is extremely complex. The Nazis did their best to keep the exterminations secret. For this, among other reasons, the extermination camps were built in Poland and not in Germany. But of course a great many men, in government, in the SS, in the industries that exploited camp labour and even the possessions and bodies of the dead, the men who worked on the railways, and many officers in the army knew, to a greater or less extent, what was happening in Poland. Only a very small minority of the population as a whole knew for sure, but others suspected. Indeed it is said that the cynical expression: "Watch out, or you'll go up the chimney!" was current in wartime Germany. But suspicion and knowledge are far apart. And for many people, both in Germany and outside, a crime of these dimensions was unbelievable. After all, though this was the country of Himmler and of the Düsseldorf murderer, it was also the land of Goethe and Rilke and Kant. The rumours might circu-

[12] The question of the German people's responsibility for the atrocities committed by their Nazi rulers has been examined, from another point of view, by Dwight Macdonald in the title-essay of his book, *The Responsibility of Peoples* (Gollancz, 1957). Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this brilliant, charitable, and profoundly Christian essay is that it was originally published in March of 1945. It would be an over-simplification to say that he "exonerates the German people." He does, however, point out that in the final analysis responsibility can only be ascribed to individuals, and that to anthropomorphise human communities has led, in this century, to terrible crimes and follies.

[13] See Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate*; also Alex Weissberg, *Advocate for the Dead* (Deutsch, 1958).

[14] There is a fundamental distinction of principle between the German and the Russian extermination camps. The prime purpose of Auschwitz, Maidanek, Sobibor, and the other German extermination (as opposed to concentration) camps was to kill the inmates: if a little productive work could be got out of the inmates before their death, this was a purely incidental gain. The Russian camps, on the other hand, were designed in order to get the maximum amount of work out of the inmates to the extent, literally, of working them to death on starvation rations. In both cases it was just possible to survive, with an enormous amount of luck, usually by becoming an official in the camp hierarchy. Figures are hard to come by and open to dispute. But a few are known. Thus, of the 125,000 men of the German Sixth Army that surrendered at Stalingrad, some 5,000 or 4 per cent survived Russian imprisonment. A much lower percentage survived from the German extermination camps, a much higher from the German camps as a whole —but then, of course, these camps were liberated. A further distinction is sometimes made, in that the Germans gassed their innocent victims, while the Russians shoot or starve theirs. This is a distinction which seems to me an unimportant one: in either case, the result is the same.

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late, but they would be quite unacceptable to many. Indeed I was informed of a woman, an Englishwoman as it happens, who while actually in the so-called hospital at Auschwitz refused to believe what she was told about the gas-chambers and crematoria a few hundred yards away. It is hard, without irrefutable proof, to ascribe so monstrous a crime to anyone, let alone your compatriots. And here again a parallel may be drawn with the Soviet Union, or rather with non-Russian Communists. Though the evidence concerning the Russian concentration and "extermination-by-hunger" camps is voluminous, many Western Communists and fellow-travellers refuse to believe it even to this day. Then, too, there must be remembered the whole German attitude towards the camps that had been built up before the war; I have already referred to this. Anything might be going on in there, but little was known for sure, and in any event it was wiser not to talk about such matters. There were rumours, about the extermination of the Jews and the burning of their bodies in huge crematoria: this might be true, but it was better not to know. Towards the end the rumours became more and more circumstantial, and indeed it was knowledge of this crime that contributed in no small measure to the officers' revolt of July 20th, 1944, but until the Allied occupation only a few people knew for sure. Thus the question of how much the German public knew remains, and will continue to remain, unanswerable: or rather any answer, from everything to nothing, can be given, according to how far suspicion is equated with knowledge. It is, however, certain that in theory at least, what Hoess did, and what he describes in the pages of his autobiography, was done in secret.

Hoess' autobiography has been most thoroughly checked, and is beyond doubt authentic. It was first published, in part, in a Polish translation in 1951, and, again in a Polish translation, in its entirety in 1957. As a result it has been known to scholars for many years, and extracts from it have been quoted in most of the many books dealing with Nazi atrocities and similar subjects.[15] But it was only in 1958 that it was made available for translation into and publication in German, French, English, and other languages.

But authentic or not, the question arises as to whether the contents are genuine, whether it is in fact possible to believe anything written by such a person as Hoess. The answer is certainly in the affirmative, and it lies in his character or what he calls, in his somewhat elevated style, his "psyche." It was Hoess' pride that he was a most conscientious administrator. Also, as he never ceases to tell the reader, he was an indefatigable and obedient worker. His defence-mechanism was such that he regarded his atrocious career as a job of work, comparable to life in the civil service. When his camp ran smoothly, which it almost never did, this was a source of pride and satisfaction to him; its customary chaos was invariably the fault of his superiors or subordinates. So when he was writing about his professional career, what interest he had in distorting the facts lay not in denying crimes, or even in concealing them, but in perhaps exaggerating the punctilious and back-breaking efficiency with which he carried out the criminal orders he received. Furthermore, he had a true bureaucrat's fantastic memory for detail. What he wrote about the camps in this autobiography corresponds exactly, sometimes word for word, with his interrogation by the British Field Security ten months earlier. A very few errors of fact were noticed by the Polish or German editors (or by myself in translating). It seems almost certain that these were all inadvertencies on the part of Hoess, and that he would have regretted them.

Secondly, as he himself states, he "enjoyed" writing this autobiography. Not only did he positively and obviously prefer work, no matter what sort of work, to idleness, but he also derived pleasure from a proper carrying out of orders received. He was ordered to write his autobiography and he did so, without any apparent hesitation and to the best of his ability. Just as his captives had been objects to him, so his criminal deeds were facts, to be dealt with objectively and with the minimum of moral or ethical gloss. Indeed what he wrote about Auschwitz might, with a few minor alterations, have been submitted as well to SS headquarters as to the Polish examining judge. These are the facts, well recalled and clearly explained, about Auschwitz and the exterminations, as seen by the man directly responsible for controlling the one and carrying out the other. As such they are surely an historic document of prime importance.

[15] For example: *The Scourge of the Swastika*, by Lord Russell of Liverpool. (Cassell, 1954.)

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When we come to what he calls his "inner life", it is something else again. Determined to display himself as the spick-and-span bureaucrat, he lays heavy emphasis on his bourgeois virtues. To a great extent he seems to speak the truth. He was probably not a thief, lazy or dirty, or an habitual drunkard; he was fond of his wife, of his children and, of course, of animals.[16] But there are certain significant omissions. For instance, while commenting sharply on his subordinates' habitual copulations (I can think of no other word) with the Jewish women in the camp, he omits to mention that he himself had a Jewish concubine (again I can think of no other word) at Auschwitz. His description of his childhood, too, and the blame he places upon his father-confessor for loss of faith are also obvious self-justification. But as he was a man miserably deficient in imagination, these perversions of the truth are almost all self-evident. The psychiatrist knows that a man's lies are even more revelatory than his truth. The portrait that Hoess draws of himself is revealing indeed.

The prose style in which he draws it is also revealing, but this is unfortunately and inevitably almost all lost in translation. He has a somewhat flowery method of self-expression and a liking for what he must have regarded as fine phrases and high-class words. This, I am told, is not uncommon in the minutes of successful civil servants. On the other hand he has a bureaucrat's passion for jargon, and, as is natural in a bureaucrat of his sort, for circumlocutions. Thus the extermination of the Jews becomes the removal of "racial-biological foreign bodies and elements harmful to the people." Murder is always "killing" and torture "punishment." Finally he makes mistakes in grammar, and often uses phrases which, current in Nazi writing, are bad German. All this has been lost in translation, though I attempted—since this is a document and nothing more—to keep my English as close to the German as possible. However, exactly to reproduce the language of the Third Reich in our own is, happily enough, impossible.

This then is the occasionally self-pitying but usually self-satisfied autobiography of one of the greatest monsters of all time. Yet he scarcely appears a monster in his own pages. How could he? His was the face that he stared at in his shaving-mirror every morning. But, and this is perhaps the most important fact of all, how does he appear to us? To me he is a nothingness, a sort of space where a man should stand. And yet he did what he did. He seems no more remarkable than the bore in the office or the country pub. But he existed, or rather what he did happened. And in this he resembles Landru or Hartmann, whom he so immeasurably surpassed, or Beria or Torquemada or Serov, his peers. Opportunity knocked, they took it. All we can do is to try with every means in our power to ensure that no such opportunity knocks for some conscientious, unimaginative, invisible beast who is even now certainly in our midst.

[16] He describes his family life at Auschwitz in almost idyllic terms: "My family, to be sure, were well provided for in Auschwitz. . . . The children could live a free and untrammelled life. My wife's garden was a paradise of flowers. . . . My whole family displayed an intense love of agriculture and particularly for animals of all sorts. Every Sunday I had to walk them all across the fields and visit the stables, and we might never miss out the kennels where the dogs were kept. Our two horses and the foal were especially beloved. The children always kept animals in the garden, creatures the prisoners were forever bringing them. Tortoises, martens, cats, lizards: there was always something new and interesting to be seen there. . . . But their greatest joy was when Daddy bathed with them. He had, however, so little time for all these childish pleasures" (p. 157).

He does not say whether the kennelled dogs were the extremely fierce Alsatians specially trained to savage the prisoners, and particularly the women. But he was in good company. Hitler, too, was fond of dogs. Goebbels noted in his diary, in March of 1942 when the crematoria were working at full pressure and the Stalingrad prisoners were dying in Russian captivity: "A little dog which he has been given now plays about in his room. His whole heart belongs to that little dog. It can do anything it wants in his bunker. At present it is nearer the Fuehrer's heart than anything else." Louis P. Lochner, *The Goebbels Diaries* (Hamish Hamilton, 1948).

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Kenneth Allsop

Black, White, and the Blues

Letter from Chicago

ON Michigan Avenue, on Chicago's South Side, a young Kentuckian wearing long Presley sideburns and a black leather jacket, and carrying a half-empty bottle of muscatel, boarded a late-night bus. He lurched down the aisle, fell into a seat and peered opaquely around. His wine-muzzy eyes lit on a Negro opposite, and a mild sort of illumination spread across his face. "Hey, you there!" he called, and an uneasy twitch of apprehensive attention galvanised all the passengers, white and coloured. But no race incident was about to erupt. The Kentuckian took a pull from the bottle and, leaning forward, said to the Negro emotionally: "You and me, boy, we're together. We're surrounded."

It would be heart-warming to be able to report that the Negro stepped across the aisle and that black and white hands gripped in brotherliness, whereas in fact the Negro stared straight ahead in glassy embarrassment in the hope of discouraging the drunk's confidences. He did, for the youth slumped into a muttering doze, and everyone's gaze drifted back to the bleak neon-glaring drabness beyond the window, where lay the city fiefs of racial and economic segregation.

Yet this random pulse of melodrama unexpectedly made real for me one small, strange aspect of the social turmoil that is still to-day as desperate a problem as it has ever been in Chicago's brief and violent history.

Immigration, the process of blood-transfusion from all the world's nations that has given America both its vitality and its over-heated, accelerated metabolism, has in this decade entered a new phase in Chicago. Between 1910 and 1920 the Negro population of Chicago doubled as a result of the demand for Southern labour to replace the influx of European immigrants stemmed by World War One. In the Depression years of the thirties the population growth of the city, including that of the Negro, ground to a halt, but in the post-war years Northern industries again tapped the South for their supplies.

What consequently happened is described by a local demographer (Professor Philip M. Hauser, of the University of Chicago) as a "population explosion," a "rapidity of growth, a change in population composition, and a mushrooming of physical problems practically unique in human history." And one bizarre element in this present sociological ferment is the creation—probably extremely tenuous and temporary, but still an actuality for the moment—of a bond of sympathy between poor white and poor black from the rural South lost and lonely in the metropolitan asphalt jungle, thrust into unfamiliarly frightening and ferocious conditions, a feeling of unity that so far all the federal integration legislation has failed to achieve in Little Rock and the Dixie hinterland.

Any day and every day the scene is the same at Chicago's railroad termini—the uncertain surge forward through the gates of entry of the newest batch of arrivals, family groups with string-lashed suitcases and bulging bundles. The Negroes are field-hands and levée labourers from the Mississippi Valley here to try their urban luck, whose wage-rates have been three dollars a day (not subsistence level in the United States) and who in recent years have heard reiteratively two alluring and challenging things in letters from friends and relatives who had earlier gone North: that two dollars-fifty an

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hour can be earned in Illinois factories and that "If you can't make it in Chicago, you can't make it anywhere." It is a matter of fine degree, but the white invaders tend to be less literate and less skilled than the Negroes. Lumped together by Chicagoans—and there's a good deal of contempt in the term—as "hill-billies," but also variously known as backwoodsmen, Appalachians, poor white trash, mountain hicks, and red-necks, they are pouring in, in pursuit of jobs and the much-advertised American Good Life, from the declining coal-pit and scratch-farm regions of Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, Alabama, and Tennessee.

The Southern migrants are arriving in Chicago at the rate of 2,000 a week. There are estimated to be 65,000 hill-billies resident, but the number is hard to check for they crowd houses as sub-tenants, are disinclined to send their children to school, and do not register as voters. The Negroes are swelling a black population which already numbers 800,000—21 per cent of the city's total—and which is thickening and expanding Chicago's black core. At a quickening rate the established white white-collar class is shifting outward to the suburbs, evacuating what a generation ago were prosperous residential districts and which are now fast becoming decaying ghettos. Nor are all the newcomers finding the jobs they expected: 75 per cent of those on county welfare aid are Negroes.

CHICAGO is an illusory city. To drive into it by car through the great complex of eight-lane freeways that swing airily across cloverleaf junctions and coiling flyovers, and then down on to the surpassingly beautiful Lake Shore Drive, is to infer that little can ail a metropolis of such radiant magnificence. For mile upon mile the rainbow cars ooze with their big-engine casualness along those lake-front tree-arcaded boulevards, on one side the white sails of that now obligatory household accessory, the small boat, flecking Michigan's blue waters, on the other the glinting, soaring sierras of sky-scraper apartment-houses and office buildings, a lovely and splendid cliff-range of towering white stone, glass, and metal. They made me think of white teeth that shine in a skull. At almost any point in those resplendent frontage miles you have to divert only a few blocks to be in the city's squalid interior, a complex of interminable, ugly, shabby streets which for long sections slide into some of the worst festering slums to be found anywhere, including Glasgow and the Middle East.

A truer sense of what you are entering is gained if you reach Chicago by train, as on this occasion I did from New York. As you approach the industrial fringes the rails fray out wider and wider into a vast skein, the convergence of 19 trunk lines, a 1,750-square-mile sorting centre for 221,000 miles of national rail arteries that end and start here, and where 45,000 goods cars are loaded and unloaded every day. Presumably you already know that you are 1,745 miles from the West Coast and 713 miles from the East Coast, but what suddenly drives home that this is the very belly of the Middle West, the central transit point of this enormous land, and so the arrival point for job-seekers from everywhere, is the sight of the banked processions of freight trucks that pass you and which are passed. For me, the insignia on their sides were a distillation of all the romance and wonder of American history, the symbols of distance and lunging frontiers and restless adventurousness. CHESAPEAKE & OHIO, PENNSYLVANIA B & O, SANTE FE, OVERLAND ROUTE MID AMERICA, ROCK ISLAND, THE CHIEF, FLORIDA EAST COAST, ARMOUR STOCK EXPRESS, SOUTHERN PACIFIC, MOBILE AND OHIO, THE ROUTE OF THE HIAWATHA, TEXAS AND PACIFIC, WABASH, LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE, EVERYWHERE WEST—BURLINGTON ROUTE . . . the rumbling litany gave me a private satisfaction, for it seemed to ring with the authentic clangour of folk-history, to be the essential stuff of that aspect of the American legend that is made up of such ingredients as Big Bill Haywood's itinerant union organisers—the "Wobblies" of the I.W.W.—New Deal construction camps, the big exoduses of *The Grapes of Wrath* period, the bums produced by the big strikes and lock-outs of the 1890s and the Depression hoboes riding the rods and the boxcars across the continent, the mythological John Henry, Casey Jones, and Paul Bunyan, the "fast Western" piano style of the Carolina turpentine camps, blues-minstrels like Blind Lemon Jefferson and Leadbelly, the break-out of jazz from the Mississippi Valley in the twenties, radical guitarists like Woody Guthrie, the period of the Dust Bowl and the migratory harvest workers and loggers . . . all the movement and mixture under economic pressures, all the fluid patterns which are only just beginning to congeal into a recognisable American image.

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CHICAGO, geographically a corradial centre for so much of this flux, is still far from congealed. To talk of minorities, meaning the racial and foreign-stock inhabitants, is misleading. It is native-born Chicagoans who are the minority. In the city's 3,700,000 population —6,500,000 within the standard "metropolitan area"—only 40 per cent are what might be called for want of a better ethnic label Anglo-Saxon American. Of the rest 15 per cent are foreign-born (Polish, German, Italian, Russian, Scandinavian, and Irish in order of numbers), 24 per cent second-generation foreign, and 21 per cent Negro. Conditions of living are not so neatly packaged as those figures. The coloured "quarter" is no longer clearly demarcated. The poverty-tide of the coloured and foreign immigrants has broken through at many points into the "respectable" areas of the city, and washes hungrily around eroding middle-class islands. The University of Chicago, down on the South Side at Hyde Park, is encircled now by Negro tenements. Adjacent to the Newberry Library on the near-North Side is a public school which has among its pupils Japanese, Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Greeks, Gypsies, Spaniards, Germans, Poles, Mexicans, and Chinese. Many of the Southern new arrivals are colonising freshly invaded districts on the West Side.

The reason for this "population explosion" is what might be called with equal justification an "industrial explosion." It is certainly true, but impossible for the mind to grasp, that just 126 years ago this present metropolis was a village of 350 people and a few onion fields reclaimed from swamp at the junction of a river and a lake, and whose Indian name meant "the smell of skunks." In 1837, when the population had climbed to 4,179, it was incorporated as a city. Eleven years later Chicago was connected with canals and railroads, and its development as a grain and meat centre began. Its population shot up. By 1860—only 23 years later—it had reached 100,000; by 1910, 2,000,000; by 1930, 3,000,000. The latest spurt upward has been brought about by the opening of 5,000 new factories since 1939, by the increase of retail trade from two billion dollars to eight billion in sixteen years, by a still expanding steel industry that employs half a million men, and by an annual handling of 72 million tons of water-borne cargo—a figure which will be vastly expanded by the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, connecting the city direct with the Atlantic, and which, it has cautiously been predicted, will result in a fresh "economic breakthrough" and push the population up to seven million in the next five years.

The peculiar paradox is that Chicago's mood is not in harmony with this bounding momentum of prosperity and material progress. To-day this does not seem the swaggering frontier town, brassy with arrogant self-confidence and bursting vitality, that has been its reputation. A banker, one of the richest and most influential political figures in Illinois, said to me: "We're not so cocky as we once were." This is also the town whose mayor, Big Bill Thompson, threatened in 1927 to "bust the snoot" of the King of England if he showed up there, which last year turned out in millions to cheer the Queen of England. There is less pride to-day in the city's lurid past, the long "open town" history of unhindered prostitution, gambling, and drinking, and there is a general sensitive resentment towards enquiries about the fourteen years of prohibition, when the corrupt alliance between crime and politics was expressed in law-flouting of a blatancy and violence unparalleled in any other American community.

THIS new sobriety may be due to a number of factors. Perhaps to the knowledge that the racketeer, behind his contemporary façade of legitimate business, still has a powerful grip upon the administration and upon civic life—a prominent lawyer whose activities are mostly in the catering field alleged to me that "there isn't a night-club or restaurant in Chicago that isn't paying protection to the hoods," and a writer, who has lived in Chicago all his life, said: "This city is as full of complicity as it ever was. The whole city's under the table. Nobody makes it legitimately." Perhaps the change is also due to the nagging knowledge that, despite that lake-front sky-line of glittering pinnacles, despite piecemeal slum-clearance and re-housing projects, internally the second city of the United States is a sleazy mess—decaying, declared a recent report, "not structure by structure, but by whole neighbourhoods and communities at a time." Perhaps, furthermore, it is due to the racial tensions that appear to paralyse effective improvements in so many spheres.

It is no doubt logical in the light of the present situation that the anxieties of so many white Chicagoans are morbidly fixed upon the swelling voting strength of the Negroes. A Civil Rights Commission survey admits that "the

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Negro population in Chicago is probably as segregated as in any large city of the United States and, perhaps, more so than in most," but the point is how much longer will the Negro stay—and, those who are honest, say can he be kept—in what the survey calls "discernible enclaves"? It is estimated that if the intake continues at its present rate, by 1975 Negroes will form one-third of the population—"I figure," one business-man said to me gloomily, "that we have about twenty years left before we get our first black mayor, and then things will get really tough for the rest of us."

Unarguably there are some Negroes who favour a tough policy as soon as it can be enforced—such as the elderly Chicago Negro Elijah Muhammad (born Elijah Poole), leader of the Moslem "black supremacy" movement, and who preaches that "every white man knows his time is up." It should be stated that Muhammad's black nationalism is attacked by the big Negro newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*—which carries in every issue advertisements for bedbug insecticides and exterminating services, for which there is evidently a good market among its readers still corralled in the "discernible enclaves" and who might be expected to be responsive to Muhammad's barnstorming.

Although "black supremacy" is an idea that is juggled about with widely different emotions by many white and coloured Chicagoans, its practical application appeared to me to be far distant from realisation. For what are immediately striking are the schisms that run jaggedly through the black community of Chicago. To the established Negro resident, who has possibly had a college education and pulled himself up by his bootstraps to at least a replica of the *Saturday Evening Post* cover way-of-life—good income, good house, good cars, good deep-freeze, good stereo system—the rough, unsophisticated arrivals from the South are an embarrassment and a drag. As much as he can he dissociates himself from the new settlers, who, he feels, have more affinity with the equally poor and illiterate hill-billies, Puerto Ricans, Gypsies, and Navajo, Hopi, Sioux, and Mandan Indians who in some numbers are trying to turn themselves into urban workers and are cramming together in the La Salle Street and Clark Street areas.

A young Negro recording company executive said to me: "There are internal race problems here. Because the hill-billies are dirty and lawless and dangerous when drunk, every white Chicagoan isn't identified with them. But when the Southern Negroes misbehave we get blamed for what they do. You see, I've got the same badge of my face."

THERE is another, less serious but to me equally regrettable, consequence of these divisions of sympathy and understanding, which can be seen to be economically horizontal as well as racially vertical. That is the obliviousness that exists among the educated Chicagoans of both colours of a sub-culture renaissance that is burgeoning in the side-street bars and cafés deep in the slum belts. There is a new, late flowering of folk-music. By this I don't mean the kind of smooth folksy cabaret dispensed at the smart *Gate of Horn* night-club by such professionals as Josh White and the Kingston Trio, but authentic rough rural stuff well below the line of potential commercialisation. This has two distinct forms. In the hill-billy clubs and saloons west of Broadway near Belmont Street, where Confederate flags are hung over the bar, the entertainment is a local brand of country-and-western imported from the Kentucky highlands. These are mountain ballads, still strongly flavoured with the English-Scottish border songs taken over to Virginia and North Carolina by early Scottish and Irish settlers, and nasally sung to a guitar, fiddle, jew's harp, or jug. In the Negro bars in the area of Cottage Grove Avenue and Halsted Street the blues are being sung and played with a volume and variety to be found nowhere else in the United States, not even in the Mississippi Valley where the blues were born. There are some subtle and complicated qualifications here. In the flashier bars, where the customers are sharply dressed and arrive in cars with tail-fins as gleamingly spear-like as any around Lincoln Park, the blues are given modern injections of tough, swinging rhythm-and-blues vaudeville style of the forties from which rock-and-roll derived, and in their worst guise have ironically soaked back a lot of the inflexions of the most moronic kind of white rock-and-roll—the over-amplified guitars and the honking saxophones.

But there are scores of places—saw-dust dives into which a white man won't get admission unless escorted by a Negro known there—where blues in the old manner, crude, funky and sad, are to be heard any time after midnight. The stars in this underground and strictly zoned entertainments industry are people like Muddy

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Waters, Memphis Slim, Little Walter, Jimmy Reed, and Howling Wolf; but there are a hundred others, mostly immigrant Southerners, middle-aged and more, who work for the Post Office or drive delivery vans during the day, who after midnight play the blues on a guitar or mouth-organ, and shout variations on such perennial themes as:

You been sweet to me and you ain't never run aroun'
Said you been sweet to your daddy and never run aroun'
But will you still be my baby when this lousy deal goes down?

In the early hours of one morning, in a bar named *Smitty's Corner* at South Indiana and East 35th Street, a blind harmonica-player named Jimpy from Georgia said to me: "Well, Chicago is blues-crazy, that is I mean the coloured people. Some of them don't want the old-style stuff. They figure that ain't hip, that all that down-and-out stuff is sentimental like you might say. But there's a lot of them who've come up from the South not so long ago who likes to hear the blues played that way, because that's what the blues really is, you know."

There are incidental reasons why the blues are the popular and universal music in Chicago's Negro town—such as the switching of the big advertising accounts from radio to television, which caused local radio stations to canvas around neighbourhood shops for paid commercials, and therefore to provide music to the liking of the immediate local, and often coloured, listeners. But the fundamental reason is that many blues-singers and musicians have followed their audience up to the North, and have found them here relatively prosperous, able to buy records and patronise bars where men who can sing the blues in the idiom they understand are hired by the night.

Although Chicago is at this moment the most richly creative centre of basic blues music—"Five years ago the blues was dead," a Negro disc-jockey remarked to me, "now it's everywhere, and, cleaned up a little, it's even on the hit parade, which I call fantastic"—the revitalisation may not last long. Already changes are discernible. As the immigrant rural or small-town Negro settles into city life, his tastes become urbanised, he tends to reject the old music as part of the square, shameful culture he wants to shed, and he adapts to the slicker and more audacious music of the rhythm-and-blues type or the polished banalities of vocal groups, and to leave the honkytonks for the *Crazee Babee Lounge* or *The Green Door*. As prosperity and confidence increase he is likely to go to the *Pershing* or the *Blue Note* to hear the Dizzy Gillespie band or the chic cleverness of Ahmad Jamal.

IN HIS report on the Negro's situation in Chicago, Professor Hauser has pointed out that

> the problems which confront the Negro to-day, although perhaps differing in degree, are essentially the same kinds which confronted our immigrant groups in the past. [But]: the problem of the Negro is not one of Americanisation, for he has been an American longer than the average white person in this country. The problem of the Negro is one of transition from a folk culture in the rural South to "urbanism as a way of life." . . .

Assimilation in Chicago is a specialised problem, for, as the "minority" groups together amount to a majority, it is something similar to the small boa-constrictor swallowing the big ox. But essentially it is the same problem that is present in most American metropolitan areas, with the Negro the acutest element because of the colour visibility factor. Nevertheless, apart from the fundamental necessity of adjustment of attitudes and values by white Chicagoans, of the need for increasing tolerance and acceptance, there is an obvious step that must be taken towards relieving the tensions in those high-density enclaves where the population presses relentlessly on the white bourgeoisie, which recedes but never fast enough to give breathing space, let alone decent living conditions, for the constantly reinforced black community. That must be a stupendous city re-housing plan on the scale of the imagination and vigour which were applied to raising the city streets out of the swamp and to making the Chicago River flow backward to solve pollution trouble. Between 1950 and 1957, 59,000 new living units (meaning flats) were provided by the city administration—but in the "deteriorated central area" sub-standard housing still constitutes more than one-half of all housing units in the almost solidly non-white area.

The blues are a plaint, a protest music that grew out of suffering, indignity, and rotten living conditions. There is still good cause for the blues to be sung in modern Chicago. When the blues die and are heard no more it will probably be a melancholy day for such folksong-hunters as I, but then Chicago will be a healthier city.

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POETRY

The Words of the World

On Wallace Stevens — By FRANK KERMODE

Two main difficulties seem to be responsible for our English reluctance to accept Wallace Stevens as a major poet. The first and more intractable is his notorious "gaudiness," the fancy and flare of his language; he is devotedly euphuistic, in the sense given to that word by his master, Santayana. "I have never been able to see why what is called Anglo-Saxon should have the right to higgle and haggle all over the page, contesting the right of other words. If a poem seems to require a hierophantic phrase, the phrase should pass," he said in a late lecture. Someone has said that Stevens wrote English as if it were French, and he himself thought it inappropriate that the language of American poetry should be English. It is evidently no good arguing with Englishmen who insist on thinking his use of their language unidiomatic or irresponsible.

The second difficulty is the common assumption that Stevens is a very narrow poet, having poetry, and almost nothing else, as his subject. To overcome this it is first necessary to read Stevens; and the English critic can best help by providing unambitious reading aids. We are not yet ripe for the subtler criticism Americans are producing on the basis of a forty-year acquaintance with the poems—for R. P. Blackmur's essays, to give an example. Elementary introductions and plodding commentaries are needed, and they should be forgotten after reading. This is an attempt at an introduction to *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*, perhaps the central poem. I have written the commentary but this is obviously not the place for it.

The short answer to the charge of narrowness is that poetry, to Stevens, meant roughly, everything that has reality; poetry and the *materia poetica*, he said, were one and the same thing. The poet "speaks the words of the world that are the life of the world." This is not merely fine talk; he genuinely makes such claims for poetry, and one can see how vast they are by comparing them with the claims of other poets, for instance, Mr. T. S. Eliot, who think art has frontiers, and that one goes on from it to other and possibly more important matters. Stevens' poet is the discoverer of an order which cannot now, and indeed never could be, discovered by anybody else; religion, myth, were forms of poetic activity which are merely no longer relevant. Consequently, the poet in Stevens is a vast, heroic figure, the "major man" who creates the supreme fiction which is modern reality. He is an "impossible possible philosopher's man," an abstraction of a special kind, but still a man and not a god, except in so far as the creator of a world may be called a god. When he creates reality, first by the feat of seeing things as they are and then by re-imagining them, clothing them in the fictions which give them human relevance, he commits the final act of imagination and invokes "the necessary angel" in whose sight we "see the earth again," cleansed of dead myth and false philosophy. He has the right to say, "Thou art not August unless I make thee so"; and his function is "to help people live their lives" and mitigate the irremediable poverty of humanity.

Stevens, though he discriminated patiently between various romanticisms good and bad, freely acknowledged—for how could he deny? —his romantic heritage. For him imagination is *"the one reality/In this imagined world,"* the instrument by which the poet finds "what will suffice" to refresh an earth whose gods are dead. It creates evil as well as good, but chiefly it creates all, and not simply poetic, value. Since it does all these things, poetry is our sun of the mind, our spiritual planet; the bringer of health, of savour, and of consolation; the slayer of the dragon of abstract philosophy; the destroyer of our poverty—"purging . . . the world's poverty and change and evil and death." It is what makes life bearable, and more:

Natives of poverty, children of malheur,
The gaiety of language is our seigneur.

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Since it is the most important fact of our lives, it cannot sensibly be called a narrow subject for a poet to dwell upon.

> What makes the poet the potent figure that he is, or was, or ought to be, is that he creates the world to which we turn incessantly and without knowing it and that he gives to life the supreme fictions without which we are unable to conceive it.

Stevens, in a manner quite proper to a poet of his generation, was deeply though not quite avowedly indebted to Henri Bergson, and one among many Bergsonian concepts that meant much to him was that of the *fonction fabulatrice*, nature's defence against domination by intellect. He was clear, however, that the fables which result can and do become obsolete. Poets invented the gods, they invented the myths, they invented heaven and hell; but all these are irrelevant to modern reality,

> *since now both heaven and hell*
> *Are one and here, O terra infidel.*

The necessary poem is now of the earth; this is a theme meditated repeatedly in Stevens' essays, and endlessly in poems which seek to be true not only to the defensive fable but to the chaos gleaming behind it; to fortuity and freshness as well as to order. The minute and unpredictable particular has to be in them—

> *Could you have said that the blue jay suddenly*
> *Would swoop to earth? It is the wheel, the rays*
> *Around the sun. The wheel survives the myths.*

And the myths have to be there, too, fresh, new-made, ready to be obsolete when reality and the observer alter their mutual stance. The *fonction fabulatrice* in Stevens produces a fantastic array of ephemeral myths and heroes, and they are all casualties in the war between the mind and sky, between reality pressing in upon a man and the defensive imagination countering that pressure. This essential biological function can be performed only by poetry; it is not, as Bergson thought, a possible job for metaphysics. Stevens collared Bergson for poetry, and he never ceased to consider the poetry-philosophy relationship; it turns up again in his last lectures.*

It seems essential, since I have brought in Bergson, to mention also George Santayana, who was even more important to Stevens. *Interpretation of Poetry and Religion* (1900) is a key book, though Stevens knew Santayana in considerable detail, and altered what he borrowed rather less than in the cases of other creditors (Whitman, Valéry, Eliot; also, less profoundly, Jean Wahl and Focillon). Santayana thought of religion as "poetry intervening in life" and hoped to see poetry emerge into reality from a "half-mythical world."

> A rational poet's vision would have the same moral functions that myth was asked to fulfil, and fulfilled so treacherously; it would employ accurately the same ideal faculties which myth used confusedly. More detail would have been added, and more variety in interpretation. . . . (*Reason in Art*).

Above all, perhaps, Stevens was a persistent anti-Platonist of the Santayana kind, regarding beauty as pleasure objectified; the "revelation of reality" produced by poetry is a *physical* revelation, a fact of the human body which the mind cannot tackle or apprehend "on its own terms." *"The greatest poverty is not to live/In a physical world,"* said Stevens again and again. George Boas wrote of Santayana that the "objectification of pleasure became for him in his poetic moments the one thing that redeems the barrenness of life"; and that this strikes one as an expression Stevens might have used is testimony of his affiliation to the philosopher whom late in life he honoured in a wonderful poem, "To an Old Philosopher in Rome."

This may make Stevens' philosophic interests sound something out-of-date; and though he seems to have read later philosophers, there is no doubt that he was most affected, naturally enough, by these older ones. Bergson and Santayana provide strong philosophical links with a Romantic-Symbolist tradition in which, in any case, he found himself as a poet; and he made them all of a piece with his other meditations. And, anyway, all this matters only as a beginning. Stevens is the poet of "the single subject thoroughly matured"; he explored it first in poetry, "the discoverer of reality," and later in prose, "the discoverer of poetry." But the explorations are enormously varied, however pervaded by that "presiding personality" Stevens always sought in other men's art, and whoever follows them will be drawn into a rhetorical environment—a *mundo*, as Stevens calls it, to distinguish it from the "real" world—of incredible variety and beauty. The "thought" matters only because a knowledge of its drift can be a help in the reading of the poems. So I will say no more about it, but move on to *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* which, being understood, makes most of the others easy. I need hardly add that "understanding" here means "being possessed by," in a way Stevens once described: "Anyone who has read a long poem day after

* These are printed in *Opus Postumus*, published in this country late in 1959 (Faber, 36s.). The same publisher has recently brought out Stevens' principal prose work, *The Necessary Angel*, first published by Alfred Knopf in 1951.

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day . . . knows how the poem comes to possess the reader and how it naturalises him in its own imagination and liberates him there."

NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME FICTION has a dream-like philosophical theme as it were immanent in its world; but it expressly doesn't philosophise, spreading no grid of categories. It "brings down from nowhere nothing's waxlike blooms." In it, "the feeling of one man is communicated to another in words of exquisite appositeness that takes away all their verbality." Any kind of comment, however delicate—and I make no pretence of delicacy—tends to put the verbality back in, and it is worth recalling a saying of Stevens which, with extreme accuracy, expresses the problem of both poet and critic: "Poetry must resist the intelligence almost successfully." He is with Eliot and Yeats and Valéry in holding that "the poem reveals itself only to the ignorant man." The clearer the explanations, the falser they are likely to be. Sometimes what is being explained isn't even fully there; Stevens is always fantastic, and when he creates a nature, as he does in *Notes*, it is shown as if in continuous creation, changing and incomplete, so that an image or an idea may be seen like Milton's lion, pawing to get free his hinder parts.

The poem, then, is unlike philosophy, as a philosophical poem ought to be, even if it deals with the interdependence of nature and the human imagination. The poet's element is the fortuitous, he is for ever being "flicked by feeling," by unheralded significances, epiphanies that are perhaps at the same time fables. "Poetry deals in *trouvailles*; hence its disorder." The poet is not organising reality, since reality is reality imaginatively seen; things as they are are things as they seem, says Stevens, so that poetry is "part of the *res* itself and not about it." So the activity of the poet is quite unpredictable, and the final poem is fact not before realised, a contribution to reality. From it ideas of order may be inferred; but the poet has made a nature and not a physics. It is a nature full of the squawk and clatter of birds, of unique flowers, of the excitement of changing seasons, unexplained personalities welling out of the *fonction fabulatrice*, irrational transitions. It gives pleasure because of the way we are, because analogies and resemblances please us, and these are not to be had if there is no irrelevance. "The irrational element in poetry is the transaction between reality and the sensibility of the poet from which poetry springs"; and this is the transaction which effects "the conversion of our *Lumpenwelt*." The important thing is that we are dealing, in poetry, not with myth but with fact, with fact not realised before; the fiction is the only, ever-changing, truth.

"ONE poem proves another and the whole," we read in *A Primitive like an Orb*; and this is certainly true of Stevens, so that to soak oneself in the *Collected Poems* is the best preparation for any one of them. However, something may be done towards an unimpeded reading of *Notes* by explanations of the sectional titles.

It Must be Abstract. "The Ultimate Poem is Abstract" is one of Stevens' more forbidding poem titles. He is using "abstract" in a special sense; it is not the abstract that Blake hated. Stevens describes the wrong sort of abstraction in "Landscape with Boat"; the man who desires this wrong kind of abstraction is gaudily described as a "Nabob of bones":

> *He never supposed*
> *That he might be the truth, himself, or part of it,*
> *That the things that he rejected might be part*
> *And the irregular turquoise, part, the perceptible blue*
> *Grown denser, part, the eye so touched, so played*
> *Upon by clouds, the ear so magnified*
> *By thunder, parts, and all these things together,*
> *Parts, and more things, parts. He never supposed divine*
> *Things might not look divine, nor that if nothing*
> *Was divine then all things were, the world itself,*
> *And that if nothing was the truth, then all*
> *Things were the truth, the world itself was the truth.*

Blake's "minute particulars" are of the essence of Stevens' abstract. The poet's abstraction is not *"a vice except/To the fatuous"*; for as Stevens says in his summary of Valéry's dialogue *Eupalinos*, "Man . . . fabricates by abstraction"; it is his way of "living in the world, but outside existing conceptions of it." The particular has to be abstracted from all the dead formulations and images that obscure it, to be looked upon as a reality free of imaginative (or, since they are obsolete, imaginary) accretions; it has to be seen absolutely, "without evasion by a single metaphor" (*Credences of Summer*). In Stevens' pervasive imagery of the seasons, winter represents this abstracted reality, a bare icy outline:

> *One must have a mind of winter*
> *To regard the frost and the boughs*
> *Of the pine-trees crusted with snow . . .*
> *and not to think*
> *Of any misery in the sound of the wind,*
> *In the sound of a few leaves,*
> *Which is the sound of the land*
> *Full of the same wind*
> *That is blowing in the same bare place*
> *For the listener, who listens in the snow*

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And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.
(THE SNOW MAN)

After winter, spring: the newly perceived analogies, related particulars, colours, sounds, rush in and vanquish the cold outline. The fully re-imagined reality is expressed as summer (the central poem for this figure is the superb "Credences of Summer"). This season is the only paradise, the full human satisfaction; and "the mind lays by its trouble." But with fall and winter the cycle proceeds.

After the leaves have fallen, we return
To a plain sense of things. It is as if
We had come to an end of the imagination,
Inanimate in an inert savoir. . . .

Yet the absence of the imagination had
Itself to be imagined. . . .
(THE PLAIN SENSE OF THINGS)

For all imaginative activity that has a real relevance to our poverty and need starts from this primary effort of abstraction. It is a recognition of reality imperceptible except in poems; and the measure of a poet's power is his ability

> to abstract himself, and to withdraw with him into his abstraction the reality upon which the lovers of truth insist. He must be able to abstract himself and also to abstract reality, which he does by placing it in his imagination.

Thus the cycle runs from abstraction through re-imagining and the loss of power in these evasions of metaphor to a new effort of abstraction, and so on.

The poem refreshes life, so that we share,
For a moment, the first idea. . . . It satisfies
Belief in an immaculate beginning.

And sends us, winged by an unconscious will,
To an immaculate end. We move between these points:
From that ever-early candour to its late plural

And the candour of them is the strong exhilaration
Of what we feel from what we think, of thought
Beating in the heart, as if blood newly came,

An elixir, an excitation, a pure power.
The poem through candour, brings back a power again
That gives a candid kind to everything.

The history of art is held to bear out such a view of the poetic process, and this is a leading theme in Stevens' important lecture, "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," a work closely associated with *Notes*. Because of change, not even Dante or Verrocchio can avoid that loss of contact with reality which is an essential of all art; change creates the need for new abstraction so that we may continue to have our pleasure and our peace. So the "ephebe" of *Notes*, the young man in receipt of this obscure advice on how to be a hero or a virile poet, must first cleanse the sun, the prime image, from all mythical accretions. Only thus can he begin the process of turning himself into "the intelligence of his soil, the sovereign ghost." (*The Comedian as the Letter C.*)

It Must Change. "The imagination . . . generates as well as abstracts," says Santayana in *The Sense of Beauty*; and, again, "It is . . . possible that changes in the character of the facts . . . should necessitate the continual reconstruction of our world." The poem must change as reality changes: "Invisible change discovers what is changed." Most of the doctrine of change as it affects poetry is in a superb late poem called "Bouquet of Roses in Sunlight," and a reading of that makes much explanation unnecessary. This ultimately Bergsonian theme is fundamental to Stevens' view of art.

> Why should a poem not change when we realise that there is a fluctuation in the whole of experience? Or why should it not change when we realise that the indifferent experience of life is the unique experience, the item of ecstasy which we have been isolating and reserving for another time and place, loftier and more secluded?

It is this constancy of change that renders obsolete heaven and hell, the myths and the gods whose departure is celebrated in the same essay ("Two or Three Ideas"). It is a late essay, but Stevens had said these things as early as *Harmonium*. Here are a few more revealing prose comments on the fact and the need of change:

> It is one of the peculiarities of imagination that it is always at the end of an era. What happens is that it is always attaching itself to a new reality, and adhering to it. It is not that there is a new imagination but that there is a new reality. (*The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words.*)

> Just as the nature of truth changes, perhaps for no more significant reason than that philosophers live and die, so the nature of poetry changes, perhaps for no more significant reason than that poets come and go. (*The Figure of the Youth as Virile Poet.*)

If we could produce any fixed image of the world, we should want to call it the chief or only image; and no matter how great and inclusive it might be, it could not content the imagination, which is "the irrepressible revolutionist" (*Imagination as Value*). The reality which is truest for us, the modern "conversion of our *Lumpenwelt*," is the product of what Simone Weil called "decreation" as opposed to "destruc-

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tion"; we pass from the created not to nothingness—that would be destruction—but to the uncreated. "Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers."

The casual is not
Enough. The freshness of transformation is

The freshness of a world. It is our own,
It is ourselves, the freshness of ourselves.

Change is essential to the precious physical reality Stevens sets up against Platonism; it provides those "revelations of reality" which are of the physical world, and not from on high:

The light
Of it is not a light apart, up-hill.
(A PRIMITIVE LIKE AN ORB)

The last words of "A Primitive like an Orb" speak of the central poem as "the giant ever changing, living in change." Change is, then, the constant topic and activity of the imagination. The poles of change are, in the language of *Notes*, the "ever-early candour" of the abstracted first idea, and its "late plural," the inconceivably various and fluctuant union of the imagined and the real. Imagination exhausts part of reality, and each new imaginative act is performed on a different matter. It is

As if the air, the mid-day air, was swarming
With the metaphysical changes that occur,
Merely in living as and where we live.

The second section of the poem consists of parables and illustrations of this theme, and of course relates it to the other two. The statue of General Du Puy, for instance, is an example of the obsolescent noble rider; he does not change, but belongs "among our more vestigial states of mind," and becomes "rubbish in the end." The fourth section is one of Stevens' most ravishing explanations:

Two things of opposite natures seem to depend
On one another, as a man depends
On a woman, day on night, the imagined

On the real. This is the origin of change.
Winter and spring, cold copulars, embrace
And forth the particulars of rapture come.

Music falls on the silence like a sense,
A passion that we feel, not understand.
Morning and afternoon are clasped together

And North and South are an intrinsic couple
And sun and rain a plural, like two lovers
That walk away as one in the greenest body.

We are made so as to desire "the exhilarations of change"; from it proceed "the particulars of rapture." Consequently the supreme fiction "must give pleasure."

It Must Give Pleasure. "The purpose of poetry is to contribute to man's happiness": this is one of Stevens' *Adagia*. He is here, and elsewhere, at one with Wordsworth and Coleridge, and indeed with the whole Romantic tradition, though closest, perhaps, to the subtle hedonism of Santayana.

> If the pleasure fails the very substance and protoplasm of beauty is wanting. . . . Not until I confound the impressions and suffuse the symbols themselves with the emotions they arouse, and find joy and sweetness in the very words I hear, will the expressiveness constitute beauty; as when they sing, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. (*The Sense of Beauty*.)

In holding this view, and its corollary that the poet is a man with a capacity for sensuous delight greater than that of other men, Stevens consciously identifies himself with one of the most enduring aspects of Romantic thought.

It is, however, essential to extend the sense of "pleasure" to include other meanings, such as "health" ("Poetry is a health"); consolation; whatever mitigates the poverty of the children of malheur. For "pleasure" is the mode of operation of the one comforter, the gaiety of language. The poet's part is

> to help people live their lives. He has had immensely to do with giving life whatever savour it possesses. He has had to do with whatever the imagination and the senses have made of the world. He has, in fact, had to do with life except as the intellect has had to do with it . . . he is an *amoureux perpétuel* of the world that he contemplates and thereby enriches.

The poet's pleasure is sometimes called a "liberation," or a "justification," meaning "a kind of justice of which we had not known and on which we had not counted," a "purification"; and in the state of elevation he provides "we feel perfectly adapted to the idea that moves and *l'oiseau qui chante*." Even the poet who created God uttered "hymns of joy" to celebrate his creation. The virile poet lives

> in a kind of radiant and productive atmosphere . . . the pleasure that the poet has there is a pleasure of agreement with the radiant and productive world in which he lives. It is an agreement that Mallarmé found in the sound of
>
> *Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui.*

He is the only giver of true pleasure, since he alone provides, not the obsolete joys of a heaven, but those revelations of reality which proceed from the "more than rational" apprehension of the physical world freshly and fully imagined. The difference between old customary joy and

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that which springs from the fiction is the subject of the first poem in the section:

To sing jubilas at exact, accustomed times,
To be crested and wear the mane of a multitude
And so, as part, to exalt with its great throat,

To speak of joy and to sing of it, borne on
The shoulders of joyous men. . . .

This is a facile exercise. Jerome
Begat the tubas and the fire-wind strings,
The golden fingers picking dark-blue air:

For companies of voices moving there,
To find of sound the bleakest ancestor,
To find of light a music issuing

Whereon it falls in more than sensual mode.
But the difficultest rigour is forthwith,
On the image of what we see, to catch from that

Irrational moment its unreasoning,
As when the sun comes rising, when the sea
Clears deeply, when the moon hangs on the wall

Of heaven-haven.

And the final poem celebrates the *mundo* which is the world so perceived. It is this power that enables the poet to bring to "the solitary and those that live in misery and terror" a message of pleasure and comfort; and "in the service of love and imagination nothing can be too lavish, too sublime, or too festive." To this theme are devoted the complex splendours of the fables which bring the poem to an end. These two hundred lines of verse seem to me to give continuously a higher delight than anything of comparable length written in this century.

The imperative, "it must give pleasure," is examined and obeyed throughout Stevens' poems. There are poems about it, from "Sunday Morning" with its paradise fully of the earth, and Bonnie and Josie *"celebrating the marriage/ Of flesh and air"* in his first volume, to the confrontation of pleasure with pain in "Esthétique du Mal" and the solemn certainties of the "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour." But there is also the deep movement of pleasure in the poems, more certain in the late than in the early, and best witnessed by the magnificent and sustained elevation of Section iii of *Notes*, where the theme challenges the poet most closely.

NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME FICTION has in each of the three sections ten poems of seven three-lined stanzas, with a short prelude and a kind of coda. The three sections lie, as it were, beside each other; there is no continuous development in the thought. "Each phrase is conceived," as R. P. Blackmur puts it, "as a version of the other two, that is, with a mutual and inextricable, rather than with a successive, relationship." Here, as elsewhere, Stevens arrives at a kind of climax (in the thirtieth poem) where he allows himself a cry of "That's it!" But "it" is a rightness of feeling, not a claim to have completed a clear demonstration. We *feel* the obscurity of an order, are content with *"the more than rational distortion/The fiction that results from feeling."* Reality has been discovered in, not imposed upon, the world, and completed by the "fictive covering" that "weaves always glistening from the heart and mind."

Yet there is, for all that, a genuine beginning and end, an early candour and a late plural, in the poem. A good deal of the doctrine is contained in the opening poems; and in the final section the fables are used to achieve a deliberate intensity of feeling. The complex and majestic Canon Aspirin poems (from v to the opening of ix, where it modulates into the bird noises of II, vi) raise the temperature of the whole work and justify not only the sober ecstasies of the conclusion but the immense and beautiful claims for poetry in the eighth poem:

What am I to believe? If the angel in his cloud
Serenely gazing at the violent abyss,
Plucks on his strings to pluck abysmal glory,

Leaps downward through evening's revelations, and
On his spredden wings, needs nothing but deep space,
Forgets the gold centre, the golden destiny,

Grows warm in the motionless motion of his flight,
Am I that imagine this angel less satisfied?
Are the wings his, the lapis-haunted air?

Is it he or is it I that experience this?
Is it I then that keep saying there is an hour
Filled with expressible bliss, in which I have

No need, am happy, forget need's golden hand,
Am satisfied without solacing majesty,
And if there is an hour, there is a day,

There is a month, a year, there is a time
In which majesty is the mirror of the self:
I have not but I am and as I am I am.

I should not expect anybody who cares about poetry to find this other than glorious; and yet it is more so when read as a sequel to the previous poem. Furthermore, it is far from being wholly representative of the tone and quality of the verse in the poem, which extends from potent argumentation to extraordinary ventriloquial bird-poems, from furious springs to the full calm satisfactions of August. Perhaps of the third section only could it be said that each of the ten poems is a great poem; but the whole work exists in a radiant and productive atmosphere, saying the words of the world that are the life of the world.

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Wreath for Lawrence?

THE destiny of D. H. Lawrence, both as a person and as a writer, must be acknowledged by anyone acquainted with the facts to be one of the most extraordinary of this century. The saga of young Bert the coal-miner's son, and its continuation as the wanderings and bickerings of Lorenzo and Frieda, are known to us all. But let us not forget what he dared, what he suffered, what he achieved. He was born of an illiterate working-man and a puritanical schoolmarmish sort of woman in a poor cottage of a Midland mining town, inheriting thereby the social disadvantages so lavishly bestowed on his "class" by the snobby, purse-proud, jingo, philistine, and hypocritical society of that epoch. Threatened with consumption from childhood, he qualified as a schoolmaster only to lose his job, without compensation, because of diseased lungs. Earning a most precarious income as a writer, he eloped with the daughter of a Prussian baron, a married woman in Nottingham, mother of three small children.

This elopement was one reason why he was hated by the virtuous. Another was that, as David Garnett most justly says, Lawrence "was the type who provokes the most violent class-hatred in this country: the impotent hatred of the upper classes for the lower." And his flaming, original, unorthodox books were as incomprehensible to them as Shelley's poems had been to their predecessors. *The Rainbow* was prosecuted, and in accordance with all the fine feelings of fair play, condemned, without the author even being informed of what was happening—which for several years reduced him and Frieda to pinching poverty, and exasperated him to the verge of madness. It was an American, Amy Lowell, whose gifts of money mainly tided them over; another American, Mabel Dodge Luhan, whose invitation to Taos gave him the impulse to visit Ceylon, Australia, New Mexico, and Mexico. Then, the illness, and near-death, at Oaxaca, the return to Europe, the confiscation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the confiscation in the post of fourteen of his *Pansies*, the confiscation of his pictures; death at forty-four, and the chivalrous British obituaries, *The End of Filth*.

But was it "filth"? And it certainly wasn't the "end."

How often in the past forty years I have skimmed through highbrow or lowbrow articles "proving" that Lawrence was a spent force and about to subside into oblivion. I pick up William White's 1950 check-list, and read: "My present check-list of more than 700 items takes up where Edward D. McDonald left off," and elsewhere in the same pamphlet: "Lawrence is translated into all European languages." And also, I may add, into many Asiatic.

America has done most for him posthumously, as it did most for him during his life. Professor Harry T. Moore, who has edited two recently-published books in America,* has been working for years on the new, enlarged edition of Lawrence's Letters, which Moore tells me will be double the size of the Huxley edition—so many people kept Lawrence's letters from the beginning, believing in his "greatness." England has produced some very good letter-writers—better than France I should say, in spite of Sévigné and Voltaire—but not one so vivid and life-giving as Lawrence. Edward Nehls after years of devoted work—I think it must be quite seven years ago we began corresponding about it—has at last completed his indispensable *Composite Biography* in three volumes. Italy is about to produce a translation of his Complete Poems; Germany plans a big revival; France, parochial as ever, will at least have a new pocket-book about him.

Obviously, some of this contemporary uproar is due to the dirty Yankosachsen obsession with what they call "dirty words" and the legal action about *Lady C.* This, of course, is perfectly true. We are all slaves of the machine, and particularly of the insatiable advertising machine, the newspaper, whose main purpose is government propaganda and the extraction of money from over-paid morons. Books with four-letter words are "news"; authors of four-letter books are "news"; authors who are "news" must be bought and displayed—in "cheaps," of course. All this is true enough, but has not much to do with the continued and world-wide circulation of Lawrence's books. All that is temporary and unimportant, and the fact is that his books would be just as much read and admired if *Lady C.* had never existed. Obviously the book, the four-letter words, the brouhaha about the American Courts' decision in its favour, have been a great advertisement. But, as anyone can see, the almost world-wide distribution of Lawrence and his books would have proceeded if this scandal-

* A *D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*. Edited by Harry T. Moore. Southern Illinois University Press. *Sex, Literature, and Censorship*. By D. H. LAWRENCE. Edited by Harry T. Moore. New York, The Viking Press.

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advertisement had never existed. And if Katherine Anne Porter thinks otherwise ["A Wreath for the Gamekeeper," ENCOUNTER, February], so much the worse for her—she believes the thing that is not. If *Lady C.* could be wiped from his list of achievements, he would still be the greatest English writer of his age. Like so many others, Miss Porter writes of his books without having understood them—you might as well condemn Shakespeare on the brothel scenes in *Pericles*. Not that I think the erotic scenes in *Lady C.* their equivalent, but that the opposition pretends they are.

FOR A LONG TIME NOW it has been customary for London to be occupied by one or more resident Americans of the intellectual kind, who spend much of their time high-hatting the natives and playing the part of *éminence grise* in the creation of opinion in matters of art and literature among the "Bulmenian literati," as one of them obligingly called us. Among them were James Russell Lowell and J. M. Whistler. The reputations thus created were sometimes more intensive than extensive. It was reported at the time (and, as far as I know, not disputed) that in the week when Henry James received the Order of Merit three of his books were remaindered. These *Herrenvolk* never did anything for D. H. Lawrence except to bestow a little condescending patronage, or to denounce him for views which were not his but gratuitously attributed to him by them for purposes of disparagement. It is easy to see what an affront to them it is that a native-born Englishman, and most distinctly out of the lowest *tiroir*, continues to steal the international literary show, especially in America.

One understands the trepidation of only half-suppressed rage which flutters throughout Miss Porter's long article, which recapitulates most of the old arguments against *Lady C.* and adds a few new points. The republication of *Sex, Literature, and Censorship* (which contains Lawrence's own defence of his book, with the addition of Judge Bryan's decision declaring the book not obscene) and of a new volume of miscellaneous studies, gives an opportunity to test one or two of her statements.

She states, for example, that "Lawrence began the uproar himself" about *Lady C.*, and quotes two characteristically violent remarks, which were made privately in letters, not printed until four years after the novel. I call that dishonest, for what she is denouncing is the public "uproar" about *Lady C.*, and that was not begun by Lawrence but by the nice, right-thinking, clean-minded reviewers, with whom presumably Miss Porter would agree. I happened to be with Lawrence when these reviews arrived, and they contained such gems of courtesy and objective criticism as these:

> Most evil outpouring . . . sewers of French pornography . . . beastliness . . . muddy-minded pervert . . . diseased mind . . . literary cesspool . . . shameful inspiration . . . this bearded satyr . . . book snapped up by degenerate book-sellers and British decadents . . the foulest book in English literature. . . .

There were scores of columns of such stuff, the finest outpouring of the great schools of Eating and Shallow, of the universities of Oxter and Cambronne. Any man would be angry at receiving such a deluge of public nastiness and insult, with the certain knowledge that any attempt to secure legal redress would have been contemptuously rejected. Contrast that with the tone of Lawrence's defence in his *Pornography and Obscenity* and *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which latter is certainly rather too long, but neither vulgar nor false.

Miss Porter quotes, more or less derisively, a few of the recent favourable opinions of *Lady C.*, including even that of Mr. Jacques Barzun, who apparently stated: "I have no hesitation in saying that I do not consider Lawrence's novel pornographic." (She also quotes Yeats, Archibald MacLeish, Edmund Wilson, Mark Schorer, and Harvey Breit.) I haven't space to analyse these opinions and Miss Porter's comments on them. I shall only note that when A. E. Housman read the book he reported that it had not stirred his passions to any great extent (*et pour cause!*) but that he considered it a much more wholesome book than *Ulysses* and Frank Harris' pinchbeck memoirs. (The "pinchbeck" is mine.) I think that strictly limited praise cannot be refuted, and since *Ulysses* has been freely circulated in the United States for twenty years, following a decision upheld by the Supreme Court, why should not the more wholesome book be granted the same rights? Moreover, there is one essential opinion on *Lady Chatterley* in America which Miss Porter does not quote, and it must have been available to her for I had a copy months ago. Here are a few of the sentences in Judge Bryan's decision, which on appeal by the United States Postmaster-General was upheld by the Supreme Court:

> The dominant theme, purpose, and effect of the book as a whole is not an appeal to prurience or to the prurient-minded. The book is not "dirt for dirt's sake." Nor do these passages and this language submerge the dominant theme so as to make the book obscene even if they could be considered and found to be obscene in isolation.

Miss Porter disagrees, and thinks it is "dirt for dirt's sake"; but the important point is that the

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administration of the law is wholly at variance with the English practice, where such a book as *The Rainbow* (which cost years of work) was suppressed on the evidence of a few passages torn from the context. Again how different from English legal practice is the following:

> . . . the sincerity and honesty of purpose of an author as expressed in the manner in which a book is written and in which his theme and ideas are developed has a great deal to do with whether it is of literary and intellectual merit. Here, as in the *Ulysses* case, there is no question about Lawrence's honesty and sincerity of purpose, artistic integrity, and lack of intention to appeal to prurient interest. . . .
>
> . . . In one best-selling novel after another frank descriptions of the sex-act and "four-letter" words appear with frequency.

So why on earth should Lawrence's book not be freely circulated, simply because Miss Porter does not approve of it, and considers him a "badly-flawed, lesser artist than James," when of course it is the Lawrentian style which has superseded the post-Flaubert tradition to which James and Miss Porter subscribe.

Miss Porter also very strongly maintains that Lawrence's views on sex are "wrong." Well, he answered that sort of criticism himself long before he thought of *Lady C.*:

> *You tell me I am wrong.*
> *Who are you, who is anybody to tell me I am wrong?*
> *I am not wrong.*

(This, by the way, is the opening of his poem about pomegranates!) Of course, anyone is at liberty to say Lawrence's views are "wrong" for him or her, but by chance the new volume of miscellaneous studies brought together by Professor Moore gives us at least one piece of objective evidence on this point. Dr. Bergler, a well-known American analyst, discusses Lawrence's intuitive treatment of Lesbianism in his novelette *The Fox*, on which the professional psychologist says:

> *The Fox* contains a series of observations and between-the-lines allusions which are clinically correct. Mingled with these are inaccuracies, but the clinically correct observations predominate.

Of course, it is up to anyone to repudiate the Freudian ideas of sex, and I quote this scientist only to show that a professional does not think Lawrence's views on sex "wrong." Incidentally, those who attribute wholly or largely to Lawrence the questionable change in the attitude to sex during this century, particularly in the United States, overlook the fact that the more extensive influence was that of Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis, and their numerous friends and followers. Anyway, Lawrence was not a Dr. Marie Stopes.

In addition to calling the intimate scenes between Connie and Mellors "dirt" ("the keeper talks his dirt"), Miss Porter thinks Connie "stupid," a "moral imbecile," and speaks of "the sense of a dreary, hopeless situation to which there can be no possible outcome except despair." As to that, the book was not presented as light comedy and Rabelaisian hilarity. Indeed, its opening words are: "Ours is essentially a tragic age . . ." and the novel is an attempt to find some way out of a tragical situation. Yeats' comment that they "faced exile from their own proper backgrounds" would apply to any couple who emigrate, and the question is whether they would be happier farming in Canada or Australia than in gamekeeping and listening to arty conversations in England.

Was Connie such a fool? Her relation to Mellors has some, indeed much, resemblance to that of Frieda von Richthofen to Lawrence, of Mme de Warens to Jean Jacques, not to mention Anet and the barber's assistant. These women want to dominate, and deliberately choose social inferiors as their mates. Frieda, of course, caught a phœnix, the "starry genius of his time," as Murry sentimentally called him. But the dominion was there all right. Again, Professor Moore's *Miscellany* brings us some concrete evidence in the shape of a hitherto unpublished letter (dated by Moore 11/5/1916) from Zennor by Katherine Mansfield to Koteliansky, in which she graphically describes a real fist-fight between Lawrence and Frieda, which finally subsided into a discussion of macaroni cheese. Next day, adds Mansfield disgustedly, "he was running about taking her up her breakfast to her bed and trimming her a hat." This dependence on Frieda explains perhaps his constant propaganda for the submissiveness of wives. A typical "Lady Chatterley" case-history is reported by Dr. Wilhelm Stekel, describing an upper-class woman who could only find satisfaction with "a forester, a powerful, rough individual," with whom "crude words escaped her lips which she would never be guilty of using on any other occasion." Yeats made a good point when he noted that in the novel, only the gamekeeper and never the "Lady" makes use of these words. Probably it showed that Lawrence had not got over his own inhibitions.

In all this, the most important fact is forgotten. It is that Lawrence as a person, and Lawrence as a writer, had and have a unique life-giving quality which no other person of his epoch possessed. When he was his best self, when

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(as Mansfield says somewhere) "his dark self was not," no more fascinating, more inspiring, person can be imagined. With him the air seemed turned to oxygen, everything was more brilliant, more beautiful, more interesting, than one had ever dreamed—and that gift of intense perception and the power to interpret it in words are Lawrence's great gift to us all. They talk of Henry James. God's truth—forgive an old private soldier—he is the deadest dead mutton beside Lawrence. Two years after the beating of Frieda scene, Katherine Mansfield saw Lawrence in London and wrote:

> . . . the dove brooded over him too. I loved him. He was just his old, merry, rich self, laughing, describing things, giving you pictures, full of enthusiasm and joy in a future where we all become "vagabonds." . . . Oh, there is something so lovable about him and his eagerness, his passionate eagerness for life—that is what one loves so.

And to conclude a most inadequate reply to a most foolish attack, let me end with a line or two from his own Lady C., Frieda:

> His love wiped out all my shames and inhibitions, the failures and miseries of my past. He made me new and fresh, that I might live freely and lightly as a bird. He fought for the liberty of my being, and won.

As for Miss Porter, I think she has richly earned a salute of twenty-one mews, which is hereby conferred on her.

Richard Aldington

A Matter of Fundamentals

Letter from New York — By IRVING KRISTOL

To appreciate the extent to which there really is a "crisis in American foreign policy," and moreover not merely a crisis in management but in basic preconceptions, one has only to ask a question: on what grounds could the U.S. Government object to the idea that all nations should possess their own stock of H-bombs? That such a state of affairs would be undesirable, even disastrous, we all know without further argument. Yet the fact is that this conclusion cannot be derived from the declared principles of American foreign policy, no matter how objectively and exhaustively these are catalogued. On the contrary: one could only infer its opposite—that the perfectly fair and equitable arrangement consistent with the "right" of small nations to defend themselves against "aggression" would be a general distribution of H-bombs throughout the world. The United States is not objecting to France's manufacturing one; it could not reasonably object to Sweden or South Africa or Israel doing likewise. Yet the prospect correctly dismays the State Department, to say nothing of the Pentagon. Clearly something is wrong—and profoundly wrong.

Two recent books* try, in their own way, to get to the root of the matter. Both have provoked considerable discussion among the policy-makers and the policy-shapers. Both are written by men who hold prominent positions in the Luce publications—Mr. Emmet Hughes directs *Time-Life*'s Foreign News Service, Mr. Max Ways is a senior editor on *Fortune*. Both have had an opportunity to observe closely the way in which American foreign policy is made—Mr. Hughes as a speech-writer on foreign affairs for the White House, Mr. Ways as a former National Affairs editor of *Time* and head of that magazine's London bureau. Both are intelligent, well-informed, and vigorous critics of the present condition of American policy. Many of their criticisms and recommendations overlap; they disagree only on fundamentals.

MOST OF THE SUBSTANCE of Mr. Hughes' critique will be familiar to those who have followed the writings of George Kennan, Walter Lippmann, and Hans Morgenthau; but the passionate eloquence with which it is expressed, the dazzling pyrotechnics of his style (which occasionally blinded this reader), and the moral urgency of his tone give their arguments a new edge. Moreover, in view of Mr. Hughes' past connection with the Eisenhower Administration, his judgment of Mr. Dulles' foreign policy naturally carries a more than ordinary weight. That judg-

* *America the Vincible*. By EMMET JOHN HUGHES. (Doubleday). *Beyond Survival*. By MAX WAYS. (Harpers).

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ment is unmitigated in its severity. "The voice of the political Jabberwock" and the "sing-song of sophistry" are not untypical phrases applied by Mr. Hughes to such phenomena as Mr. Dulles' claim that the Soviet withdrawal from Austria was a "roll-back" due to the "moral pressure" of the United States, or to the statement by Vice-President Nixon (in a speech written by Mr. Dulles) that the American position on Suez was the equivalent of "a new Declaration of Independence." The "great debate" which Mr. Dulles announced he was opening in 1952 was "phoney," as was the "new policy" he loudly proclaimed—it was not new, and it was hardly deserving of being called a policy.

But Mr. Hughes' polemic is not *ad hominem*. He believes that the sorry performance of the past decade has its sources deep in American attitudes; that there is little reason to think a Democratic administration would have done much better; that it was less the men and their specific judgments that were at fault than the whole historic drift of American foreign policy.

> The illusions that America has cherished, these unavailing years, have not been mere lapses of logic. They have not been slips of the tongue. They have been accents natural and true to the deliberate speech of the nation.

Indeed, Mr. Hughes sees the entire history of his country as a standing "invitation to illusion," so far as foreign policy is concerned. The hasty demobilisation after World War II was no unprecedented accident: in 1783, with victory in the War of Independence assured, the Continental Congress reduced the U.S. Army to a strength of eighty privates, assigned as watchmen at Fort Pitt and West Point. War was war, peace was peace, and nothing lay in between. Nor did America's experience in territorial expansion, at the expense of a small number of native Indians, prepare her for an understanding of the problems of colonialism and empire.

> We won a continent—without meeting the great conflicts, the harsh decisions, the delicate choices, attending almost all imperial adventure. . . . We, as a people, missed most of the education of a great nation.

Things came too easily to America: and her good fortune bred bad habits of mind. Especially did it encourage Americans to confuse private morality with public policy, and to imagine that the amiability, the gregariousness, the neighbourliness of "our town" could adequately supply principles of international action. Americans were (and are) loath to face squarely up to the harsh fact that the world was not made in the American image, and that if Americans were to act responsibly in this larger world they would have to act differently from what seemed "natural." Instead, they insisted on coating this reality with a sickly veneer of pretence. When, for instance, in 1953 the U.S. negotiated an agreement with the Spanish Government, whereby it paid dollars in exchange for military bases, the agreement described the two signatories as "recognising . . . individual liberty, free institutions . . . a free economy." That this was hypocrisy is less to be deplored than that it was not even cynical hypocrisy. The American idea of an alliance prescribed that it was to be made up of "peace-loving" and "freedom-loving" nations. Rather than re-examine this idea, the State Department blandly denied the reality. And this particular case, of course, only stands for innumerable others.

Mr. Hughes describes five American myths which, he feels, are crippling American foreign policy:

1. A free society assures strength, while tyranny is a sign of weakness—"time is on our side." The most important consequence of this belief is that public opinion makes it almost impossible to execute the urgent and drastic things that need to be done unless a spirit of alarm and hysteria is artificially generated—and this spirit, unhappily, while making action possible, also makes it likely that it will not be wise and prudent action.

2. Economic progress assures political stability —hence there has developed an ideology of foreign aid which pretends to have the master key to international problems, a key that is all the more bewitching in that it costs only money.

3. Any division between nations must be a division between good and evil, while any alliance among nations must have, not only a common policy, but also a common conscience. Thus, any country that agrees to sign one of the countless international pacts generated by American diplomacy is automatically incorporated into the "free world." Those, on the other hand, who fail to do so reveal a moral deficiency, as Mr. Dulles used to explain time and again at his press conferences.

4. All peoples and all nations are essentially alike and essentially equal. This thesis dominates the American attitude towards the United Nations, and helps explain why she keeps trying to build up the authority of the Assembly at the expense of the Security Council—something she will one of these days have cause to regret. It also helps explain American incapacity to face up to the problem of a dispersal of H-bombs all over the globe, as well as her marked reluctance to provide leadership in policy to her allies.

5. Secret diplomatic negotiations are, like secret assignations, immoral and conducive to no

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good end. Hence the American shyness to attend a summit meeting—or any number of summit meetings—with Russia. Behind this reluctance is a fear of facing up to the disagreeable realities of America's international power position. Rather than have to submit to the task of squaring her commitments with her power, she prefers simply to commit herself to the ideal and trust in providence to bring it about.

Beneath these various myths, Mr. Hughes sees one original error, a sin of pride. Because America is an integral and vital part of Western civilisation, and has obligations to that civilisation, there is a tendency to identify America with it, to try to speak authoritatively in its name, and ultimately to try to impose its values on the entire world. Such an enterprise, Mr. Hughes asserts, is quixotic, and is bound to proceed from failure to failure, eventually to doom.

Thus Mr. Hughes, in a plea for America's coming-of-age. And now to Mr. Ways, whose fear is of American decadence, a failure to be true to its original and deepest self.

'THE one situation in which a man cannot learn from experience is where he does not understand what he was trying to do." And that, according to Mr. Ways, is the case with American foreign policy. He is, moreover, able to make his charge stick by pointing to the fact that, in the immediate post-war years, when Russia had no atom-bomb, the American power position was far stronger than it is ever likely to be again. At present, in the shadow of the Sputniks, the Administration is trying desperately to restore as much of this position as it can. But to what end? The U.S. was not able, when it was really possible to "negotiate from strength," to prevent Czechoslovakia and China from coming under Communist domination. Nor could it then wring any significant concessions from the Soviet rulers. Power itself is no better than weakness, if one does not have a clear idea of how that power ought to be used.

What, Mr. Ways enquires, is the "central purpose" of American action in the world? The two customary replies are couched in terms of either (1) survival or (2) national interest. He has little difficulty in demonstrating that both are disingenuous. America's actions in South Korea, Berlin, and Lebanon were patently not necessary for her "survival as a nation," even if she had to pretend they were. That South Korea is not Communist makes as little difference to the chances for American survival as the fact that North Korea is. The true motives were not so egoistic, but Americans had not the words for them. Similarly, the idea of "national interest" is derived from a false analogy with the status of Great Britain as a world power in the 19th century. Britain *did* have world-wide commercial and economic interests, crucial to her national well-being, and which did shape her policy. Twentieth-century America is in no such situation: acting the world power is for her a burden not a privilege. Yet Secretaries of State will solemnly inform Congress that it is "in our national interest" to help build schools in India or Ghana, eradicate locusts in Arabia, subsidise commissaries for tin miners in Bolivia, have a display of modern painting in Moscow, or put on a jazz concert in Copenhagen—in short, to do anything a Secretary of State wants to do. The result is that America is continually discrediting herself before the world. Most Americans comprehend dimly that on such occasions the term "national interest" is being used as a substitute for goals and purposes that recommend themselves, for various reasons. But the rest of the world is only too ready to take the Secretary of State at his literal word, and to impute to him a selfish cunning that he had himself dishonestly laid claim to.

To a large extent, this confusion about America's own motives is a reaction to the kind of naïve crusading idealism that led Woodrow Wilson to his fiasco. Mr. Ways, though no crusader, thinks the American people *are* committed to the Wilsonian formula—"to make the world safe for democracy"—understanding this to mean, not dramatically converting the world to democratic beliefs, or imposing by fiat democratic institutions all over, but that it is America's overriding duty to assist and encourage all peoples to govern themselves under free institutions. This is the moral principle of American foreign policy. Any attempt to eliminate or ignore it, can lead only to self-contradiction. For this principle is inherent in the very nature of the American democracy. If foreign policy is to be judged (as it must) by public opinion, this can have reference only to its moral dimension—the people are not in a position intelligently to analyse the intricacies of military technology or economic development, whereas they can (or so the American system assumes) take a fair reading of this policy's more general aspects, and especially can express its opinion as to whether it is "in the American grain." It is absurd to ask the public to do more; it is folly to ask it to do less.

It is true that the fighting of World War I in the name of high moral purpose led to public disillusionment and cynicism—that was a failure of utopian leadership. But it is also true that the fighting of the Korean War in the name of no purpose at all led ultimately to public demoralisation. Opinion outside the United States—even informed opinion—has not yet grasped the import of this last experience. The Korean War was

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unpopular to a degree that makes it inconceivable for any future Administration to contemplate that kind of limited, rigorously defensive military action. The scholars and the diplomats can continue to devise ingenious gradients of warfare, countering each enemy action with just so much (and no more) reaction. But they are indulging in a paper game. The American people cannot provide the kind of mercenary, professional soldiers such plans require.

THE real problem, Mr. Ways insists, is not the American mixture of morals and politics. It is the establishing of their valid connection. In order simply to divorce morals from foreign policy, and to gain the freedom of action that some academic critics would wish, the Declaration of Independence would have to be suppressed, the Constitution abrogated, and the "American way of life" miraculously transformed into something else. Mr. Ways is therefore sharply critical of any attempt to "professionalise" American foreign policy, in the sense of leaving it to the diplomats to accomplish what they think it is within our means to do, unharried by public opinion. Not only is this impossible. It is, within the framework of American democracy, undesirable. The "reasonableness" of the professional diplomat too often signifies, first estimating what can be done, and then setting this up as our goal. This procedure is as irrational in diplomacy as in war. The whole precedes the part, and it is not really possible to decide what is a reasonable accommodation between ends and means without first having given thought to the ends themselves. One cannot even properly estimate what is "within our means" unless one has joined this measure to our ends. And to fix these ends is, according to American democratic doctrine, the responsibility of public opinion—or, to be more precise, what Mr. Ways called the "public philosophy."

Mr. Ways does not mean by this term what Mr. Lippmann did, in his book of that title. He is not referring to the underlying metaphysical presuppositions of a society, but rather to the intermediary layer of opinion that coherently links these suppositions to effective political action. For example, it is now a doctrine within the American public philosophy that the use of military force in international affairs is justified only when "aggression," narrowly defined, has occurred. Our posture is wholly defensive; and this thesis defines the conditions of defensive action. A moral inhibition is laid upon our political movement. But, unfortunately, no moral purpose is set before this movement; while a merely tactical purpose turns out in the end to be intolerably frustrating. Not only is the inhibition itself unduly constrictive (as the desperate invention of the notion of "indirect aggression" indicates); it can also be at the moment of action, unduly permissive. Once "aggression" has occurred, there are no moral limits to how one can react—one is free to wage "unconditional warfare," to engage in "massive retaliation." The morality is located only in the inhibition on action; it is not wedded to the purpose of action. The result is the present American military establishment, competent to destroy the civilised world, and not competent to do much else.

Mr. Ways finds the American public philosophy to be in a condition of grave deterioration. For this he blames "positivism"—a state of mind that denies the existence of objective morals and legal norms, diligently destroys all efforts at defining them, and thereby makes it impossible for America to conceive of its own political rôle in other than the most narrow terms. Such a conception is not only incongruent with America's finest sensibilities. It is utterly inadequate to the world's dilemmas and the world's longings. What the world needs at this time is a system of order within which the 20th-century technological revolution can take place without making life intolerable in its anxieties, its complexities, its miseries. Communism does propose such a system—an inhuman system, true, but one that human beings will prefer to no system at all. The success of Communist foreign policy since the war does not derive from any diabolical cleverness on its part, or from any supposed advantages that despotism has over popular government. The Communists have been more successful because they have a clear idea of what kind of world they want to construct. In contrast the United States is infirm of purpose—and by that very fact contributes in a major way to the world's instability.

It is important to emphasise that Mr. Ways does not advocate the artificial manufacture of an "ideology" that would "help win the Cold War." He believes America already has, not an ideology, but an idea. This is the idea of strong but limited government, in which freedom and order, liberty and justice, are reconciled within the framework of representative institutions. The "self-evident truths" on which the American government was established have their roots in two thousand years or more of Western civilisation. They are not uniquely American; America does not possess them so much as they possess her. She cannot export them like so many commodities, but if she actually does believe them to be *true*, they must form the guide of American policy, external as well as internal. Such a guide would assist in building genuine international institutions of order with those of her allies

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who also share these truths, instead of dissipating her purpose by vague generalities at the sessions of the United Nations. It could enable her rationally to allocate foreign aid appropriations and to be candid as to their intentions—something she is not now able to do. It could permit her to bring her military policy under sensible control, replacing the notion of "massive retaliation" by a military doctrine that allowed for American initiative in specific, limited circumstances. Above all, it would provide American diplomacy with a form, a meaning, a purpose.

HERE, then, is a pointed and poignant antithesis. In effect, Mr. Hughes is demanding that the American republic learn to manage its foreign affairs according to the rules by which all nations have in the past survived the perils of international lawlessness. That there are such general rules, that there exists a *sagesse des nations* available to all, is his major assumption. What America must learn, he insists, is sophistication. To which Mr. Ways retorts that such "sophistication" corrupts, that it is not possible to govern one's domestic affairs according to "self-evident truths" while constructing one's foreign policy on the premises of *Realpolitik*, that unless public morality can define and defend foreign policy, Americans will at best be in a position where this morality will serve—as it does to-day—only to frustrate policy.

The fact that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Ways clearly agree (as intelligent men will) on many specific points cannot obscure the fact that there is a profound opposition between them. To British and European ears, the terms of this opposition will inevitably sound more than a little odd. But that is because foreign policy has, in these older nations, traditionally been a dynastic prerogative, while the reigning "public philosophy" has had only a tenuous connection with popular opinion. Yet this traditional attitude is changing; it may even have died, its tombstone bearing the inscription, "Suez." In any case, there is every reason to think that this American debate has a more than parochial significance; and that it is "American" only to the extent that it is in America that the ultimate political decisions are now being most nakedly confronted.

This debate has a general meaning for another reason. For it is not only American actions that affect the course of world affairs; it is also *the kind of* America that takes these actions which counts. The pre-eminent virtue of this little collision between two books is to reveal that the crisis in American foreign policy is a crisis in American self-consciousness, in American self-definition. There can be no debate on American foreign policy that is not also a discussion of the essentials of American democracy itself. What America does will be mainly determined by what America is. And what America is, of course, will be determined by what she does.

The Reichstag Fire

ORWELL had his forebodings about totalitarian success in re-writing history ("lies becoming the truth"), but history has many cunning passages. The West German weekly *Der Spiegel* has been running an important and fascinating series of articles over the past couple of months on the subject of the *Reichstag* Fire of 1933. These articles are based, it appears, on an unpublished private investigation into the circumstances of the fire, undertaken by a certain Herr Fritz Tobias, an elderly civil servant now living in Hanover. Herr Tobias, himself a victim of Nazism after 1933, evidently set out with the firm intention of establishing Nazi complicity in the affair. He re-sifted, with German *gründlichkeit*, the entire literature relating to the Fire, and managed to contact many of the surviving witnesses. To his astonishment, he discovered that the evidence pointed to an explanation of the whole affair, so simple, that nobody seems to have thought of it. He suggests we accept Van der Lubbe's confession, to which he stuck throughout the trial, that *he* had set fire to the *Reichstag*—alone and unabetted.

If this version should come to be accepted (and West German historians like Professor Theodor Eschenburg, and Dr. Hoch of the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich, seem disposed to take it seriously) a certain amount of re-writing of history will be required. *Der Spiegel* points out, not without *schadenfreude*, that a great many historians, Alan Bullock among them, have adopted the older version in a surprisingly uncritical spirit. Actually, though Alan Bullock ascribes the planning of the operation to Goering and Goebbels, and its execution to the Berlin SA leader Karl Ernst, he does confess ". . . there are unsolved riddles in the history of that night" (*Hitler, A Study in Tyranny*, p. 237). Others have been less cautious, and *Der Spiegel* is able to quote a long list of West German school and university text-books in which it is stated categorically that the Fire was "the work of the SA." Indeed, for all practical purposes the story of the "doped," "cretinous," "homosexual," "Nazi creature" Van der Lubbe, and of the mysterious underground passage leading to Goering's residence, has simply "become the

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truth." The journalists who run *Der Spiegel* are Germany's professional debunkers (the necessary complement, no doubt, of an excessively gullible public opinion); and they know when they are on to a good thing. Yet even if they, and Herr Tobias, turn out to be right about the *Reichstag* Fire, they may be exaggerating the importance of their own contribution to history. After all, the historical significance of the Fire was, and will remain, the use to which the Nazis put it: the suppression of the German Communist Party and extension of their own power. The most interesting aspect of the whole affair is rather *how* the older version came to be accepted.

THERE SEEM TO BE two main sources of information about the *Reichstag* Fire: the famous "Brown Books," edited in Paris, and the various statements and depositions recorded by the Berlin police at the time, and produced in court during the trial. In the normal way, historians would go for the latter evidence, and tend to look askance at an anonymous and largely unsubstantiated compilation like the *Brown Book of the Hitler Terror and The Burning of the Reichstag*. But this is to ignore the political circumstances. The historians of Nazism are good anti-Fascists to a man; and it was the *Brown Book* that first documented and brought home to people in Western countries what was happening in Nazi Germany. Thus, anyone who had been in the fight against Fascism in the 'thirties, was likely to be predisposed in their favour. On the other hand, no good anti-Fascist would be likely to take any evidence produced in a Nazi court at face value. The normal canons of evidence were reversed: the circumstantial evidence provided by Lubbe's confession, by the police, the psychiatrists, and by eye-witnesses was dismissed, and the speculations of the *Brown Books* were uncritically accepted.

The *Brown Books* were the work of Willy Münzenberg and his Comintern "anti-Fascist" organisation in Paris. The circumstances of their composition are described by Arthur Koestler in his autobiography *The Invisible Writing*:

> We had no direct proof, no access to witnesses, only underground communications to Germany. We had, in fact, not the faintest idea of the concrete circumstances. We had to rely on guesswork, on bluffing, and on the intuitive knowledge of the methods and minds of our opposite numbers in totalitarian conspiracy. . . .

Herr Tobias has no difficulty in showing that the "guesswork" was a very slapdash affair. To take one example: in order to substantiate the story of Van der Lubbe's "intimate connections with leading members of the SA," it was thought necessary to invent a homosexual case-history for him. Herr Tobias shows that practically every detail in this "case-history" is wrong. Van der Lubbe's father, for instance, who is said to have "died young," had in fact lived to be over seventy. Again, the *Brown Book* quotes a friend of Van der Lubbe's as "having slept with him often in the same bed"; but suppresses the rest of the quotation which runs ". . . without ever having observed homosexual tendencies of any kind." Finally, even a photo of baby Van der Lubbe with his parents, printed in the *Brown Book*, is shown by Herr Tobias to be in fact a photo of his brother Jan.

But Koestler's remark about "intuitive knowledge" of the opponent's methods is as revealing as the admission of the amount of guesswork in the *Brown Book*. No doubt Koestler is right in thinking that Communist and Nazi methods had much in common. But there is an element of "projection," too, in the remark. The *Brown Books* are a description of what the Communists *thought* the Nazis had done (because they would have done it themselves). But the Nazis were neither as astute nor as firmly in the saddle as the Communists tended to assume. According to the *Brown Book*, Hitler was looking out for the first opportunity to ban the Communist Party. Yet the minutes of a Cabinet meeting on January 30th, 1933, show that Hitler was inclined to caution in this respect, while Hugenberg pressed for an immediate suppression (in the *Brown Book* it is, significantly, the other way round). Nor was Germany by any means a thoroughgoing totalitarian state in the first months of 1933. Goering was soon to begin a large-scale purge of the civil service, but the *Gleichschaltung* of the police forces and the judiciary did not take place over-night. It is reasonable to suppose that many of the officials concerned were simply "carrying on with the job," as though the Weimar Republic were still alive.

This is a crucial point. We have to distinguish between the sections of German life already *gleichgeschaltet*, and those still functioning in a comparatively normal way. The German press, for instance, was already largely in Goebbels' power, and is therefore suspect as evidence. But what of the report of the two expert criminologists in charge of the case, Herr Heisig and Dr. Zirpins? They investigated Van der Lubbe's very detailed confession and found it entirely consistent with the evidence of other witnesses and with their own researches. Their report, dated March 3rd, 1933, concluded:

> The question whether Van der Lubbe carried out the act of incendiarism single-handed can be confidently answered in the affirmative. . . . Van der Lubbe gave us an exact and detailed description

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> of the scene of crime and of his own sequence of actions from memory *before* the reconstruction of the crime . . . only the incendiary himself would have been in a position to do this.

They added that Van der Lubbe seemed to them to possess a remarkable, if somewhat one-track, intelligence (an impression confirmed by the eminent psychiatrist Professor Bonhoeffer, who examined Van der Lubbe a few weeks later: this contradicts the description of Van der Lubbe in the *Brown Book* as an "idiot"). Herr Heisig and Dr. Zirpins survived the war, and never retracted their view that Van der Lubbe set fire to the *Reichstag* single-handed (though in deference to Goering they suggested in their original report that Van der Lubbe might have been acting on orders from "a third party"). Their report is the most direct evidence now available: there seems no good reason why it should not be accepted.

THIS IS THE CORE of Herr Tobias' and *Der Spiegel*'s case; they are asking, in effect, for a return to the normal canons of evidence. The primary evidence points to Van der Lubbe as the sole incendiary: it is for the opponents of this thesis to prove that he was not. In fact, most of the evidence for Nazi complicity is pretty flimsy. The "underground passage," of which the *Brown Book* made so much, was searched on the night of the Fire at Goering's specific command. The doors were found to be locked: a fact which will square neither with Goering's assertions about Van der Lubbe's "Communist accomplices," nor with the *Brown Book*'s speculations about the group of SA-men who are supposed to have vanished along it. It looks, in fact, as though this is one crime of which Goering was genuinely innocent. After the war, and even in the death-cell, he vehemently denied having had a hand in the affair. And why should he have concealed the truth about the *Reichstag* Fire, when he was frank enough about far more terrible crimes? Sefton Delmer, who was an eye-witness of the meeting between Hitler and Goering in the burning *Reichstag*, writes in a letter to *Der Spiegel* that he remains convinced that Goering's, Hitler's, and Goebbels' consternation on the night of the Fire was completely genuine.

Obviously, one can't hope to do more than give an outline of the new evidence *Der Spiegel* has made available. Herr Tobias' manuscript is said to run to 60,000 words, and many further witnesses are likely to come forward. It will then be up to the professional historians to pronounce judgment, and, if necessary, make confession of their errors. But the sheer weight of new evidence seems, to an amateur at least, pretty convincing. And, if the received version does fail to survive *Der Spiegel*'s onslaught, it will no longer be difficult to see how it came to be accepted in the first place. People argued from the correct premiss that it was the kind of action of which Goering and his friends were eminently capable, to the false conclusion that they must actually have done it. And the undoubted truth of the revelations of Nazi lawlessness and brutality in the *Brown Book* must have made its version of the affair the more plausible.

The question of *how* the legend came to be believed may prove, as I have suggested, of even greater interest than Herr Tobias' devoted historical detective-work. Historically, the significance of the *Reichstag* Fire will remain what the Nazis made of it; just as the importance of the subsequent trial, at which Dimitrov made mock of Goering, will remain what the Communists made of *that*. But, beyond this, the story is a fine sport of historical irony. Neither Dimitrov nor Goering was in possession of the truth: each believed what his ideology led him to believe. Goering was convinced that the Communists had burnt down the *Reichstag* because he believed that a Communist revolution would begin in that way (this may seem unlikely to us; but a National-Socialist might well think like this). Dimitrov, Münzenberg and company needed, of course, to demonstrate to the world their own innocence and the Nazis' guilt. But there was more to it than that. To them, as to the Nazis, the *Reichstag* Fire had to be, in Hitler's favourite phrase, *ein welthistorischer Augenblick*. It had to be given a world-historical significance appropriate to its Wagnerian atmosphere. It had to be, if not the *Weltuntergang* itself, at least a diabolically clever plan to encompass the ruin of "the red enemy" in Germany.

Neither contestant entertained for a moment the idea that a hare-brained idealist like Marinus Van der Lubbe, responsible to no party, representing no interest, might be the sole author of this spectacular feat of incendiarism. Yet Van der Lubbe emerges from Herr Tobias' researches a very human figure, and the true hero of the story. As Rudolf Augstein, *Der Spiegel*'s editor, puts it in his foreword to the series: "His vision may have been crude, but at bottom this naïve, intelligent Dutchman saw things as they were: the German workers were to be made the instruments of aggression against the rest of Europe. . . ." It was to prevent this, as he told the police on the night of the fire, that he had decided on his lonely action of protest. There is no doubt about Van der Lubbe's passionate sincerity, nor about the courage with which he accepted full responsibility for his deed: it was

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the refusal of Communists and Nazis alike to give him credit for it that finally broke his spirit. Yet this modern Guy Fawkes did not fail entirely in his object. After all, even if he failed to touch off a workers' rising against the Nazis, he did in the end awaken an apathetic world to what was going on in Germany. The true joke of the trial was that both Goering and Dimitrov were fooled. Perhaps that was what caused those outbreaks of uncontrollable laughter on Van der Lubbe's part that puzzled so many observers at the time.

John Mander

Out of Africa

A Negro Writer's Reply — By EZEKIEL MPHAHLELE

IS THE world *seriously* expecting or demanding a spurt of literary activity from the new and emergent Africa? Mr. Dan Jacobson [ENCOUNTER, October], which I have just seen, thinks it is. To prove that it is idle for people to expect it, he quotes from Hannah Arendt's book, *The Burden of Our Time*:

> Mankind remembers the history of peoples, but has only a legendary knowledge of prehistoric tribes. . . . What made them (the Africans) different from other human beings was not at all the colour of their skin but the fact that they behaved like a part of nature, that they had not created a human world, a human reality, and that therefore nature had remained, in all its majesty, the only overwhelming reality—compared to which they appeared to be phantoms, unreal and ghostlike.

It is necessary to strip Mr. Jacobson's article of a few sweeping assertions so that we may appreciate the most relevant part—that which treats of the present. We may also be better able to see the peculiar problems of the African writer as part of the larger human predicament. The points we want to get clear in our minds are the belaboured thing about the history of Africa, the "willed severance from the past," and what Mr. Jacobson's authority calls "a human reality."

I don't known about prehistoric tribes and at what point in the line of history a writer's reference ceases to be relevant. But I do know that there is in the oral literature of African nations a considerable body of history which indicates very clearly the moral and social codes that governed the lives of people a very long time ago. I am keenly conscious of where I fall in this long line of continuity among the Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa. It is a history that has been disturbed first by missionaries, then by traders, and then by military conquest.

We should not talk as if someone touched down on some place in Africa and around him communities popped out from under the ground to begin a new life on the surface of our globe. Let me take the extreme case of Africans in South Africa. There are 4,000,000 Africans in the urban areas, 3,000,000 working on white people's farms, and 3,000,000 in the rural reserves. The first two lots consist of people who have lost all tribal affiliations in terms of chieftaincy, and their old moral codes have been battered about. And yet there remains something solidly African in them that has a distinct reference to the past. It has to do with the manner of self-expression through music, dance, song, and behaviour patterns. In all this, there has been a compromise between our past and the present. Listen to the music that has been composed by the post-missionary musicians who have infused European forms with an African idiom and African rhythms. In the simplest forms of self-expression like jive, there are subtle rhythms which distinguish the European from the African.

If, as Mr. Jacobson says, our use of English and French indicates a "willed severance from the past," it is simply a position in which we find ourselves as a result of European conquest. And by a twist of irony we can often tell the French and English in their own languages how we dislike their ways! These European languages have been, and still are, a unifying medium for the various tribes that people our continent, and the only way to foster nationalism and to conduct political pamphleteering for the purpose. In fact, there are many more African creative writers using their vernaculars

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than those who write in foreign languages, even in South Africa. Since 1870, when the first Bantu newspaper was founded by Africans in the Cape Province, the volume of vernacular writings has been increasing. There is a considerable body of verse, drama, and fiction in Sotho, Zulu, and Xhosa. And yet, the best thing that could happen to Africa would be to retain English and French as official languages in addition to the common vernaculars. That way we enjoy the best of both worlds. Rather than interpret it negatively as a "severance," we should realise that its positive value lies in our ability, through the use of these languages, to conquer our present-day external world. We can also make African symbols and images available to the rest of the world, and thus the fusion of cultures takes a more natural course.

EVEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT of apparently deliberate severance, there are cross-currents of political motive and intent. In South Africa, for instance, our past, in its most tattered form, is being used by the white ruling class as a means of entrenching themselves all the more. It is not our traditional culture that is being recaptured for us, but such bits as can be rammed into the local government machinery to give a semblance of self-rule and at the same time arrest the African's mastery of his technological environment and his academic attainment. In countries of British influence, nothing has been pegged, and there is an expedient resort to one or other of two cultures at different times. In French-speaking countries, although the educated African is an assimilated gentleman, he remains an enigma. Only recently, he has come to sense the *cul-de-sac* into which the lure of Paris lights has led him. He is now staggering back, groping to reach out for his African past as a compensatory response.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT Hannah Arendt means when she says: ". . . they had not created a human world, a human reality." What more human reality does one need than that people have socially and politically organised lives? Of course, our civilisations did not float on the back of advanced technology or on stocks and shares. Africans have always been more interested in human relations than in gadgets, even when they realise that they have to operate machines for a living. Africans have always gravitated towards people, not places and things. Why, they have not yet, to any significant degree, taken up the idea of a vacation at a holiday resort. People, and not places, give them real pleasure. They want a *social* climate where they can *make* music and fun and not just *listen* to music and *look* at a performance.

For our traditional idea of culture is not a performance for the few who can get into formal dress and afford a ticket to watch it. Culture is part of the very process of living, of a stream of consciousness, in which a whole community takes part. The Sotho proverb, "Nothing belongs to you except that which you have eaten" cuts across all the competitive economics of the West. Men and women organised themselves into groups to build one man's house or hoe or harvest his field, and then he joined them to work on somebody else's. The lazy man was outlawed; a man never died of hunger, even when he was too ill or crippled to work.

I am saying, in other words, that this is a human reality that matters more than everything else to the Negro writer in Africa. He is the product of an order that could only generate life and never destroy or corrode it.

I should be inclined rather to feel sorry for the white writer in Africa, whose problem, as Mr. Jacobson rightly says, is not made bearable by the same consolation and nourishment the blacks derive from their struggle. He is many generations removed from European cultures, and is too scared to come to terms with the indigenous peoples and the human reality they have to offer. His fear has driven him into a civilised posture in which he fancies that he is the custodian of the very civilisation his actions are discrediting. Afrikaans literature, particularly the novel, has not quite outgrown frontier delusions. The English novel in Africa has been grappling with the immediate problem of race-relations to the exclusion of any reference to a universal context, except in the case of Olive Schreiner's and William Plomer's works. English poetry has just not been able to settle down and reconcile its tradition with a new world of symbols. It is essentially still a verse in exile.

The most significant part of Mr. Jacobson's thesis is that which deals with the African writer's present dilemma and the literary material his handicaps and disabilities can afford him. The problem splits itself somewhere. The white writer is at the mercy of the white politician in Africa. His race must simply face up to complete social and economic integration with non-whites in order to create a non-racial society. This way our literature will form part of a common stream of culture in which two or more streams of consciousness influence one another. As long as there are racial barriers our literature will continue to be sectional. In multi-racial communities like South Africa, the Rhodesias, and Kenya, the question of local involvement for both black and white writers hinges on the willingness or otherwise to create mixed societies. The reason why, in the world of fiction, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, and

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William Faulkner are the greatest interpreters of cultures and character outside their own colour groups is that they had no artificial racial barriers to contend with, such as we find entrenched in the legislatures of Africa.

For the African Negro the problem lies in the struggle to express the larger irony which is the meeting point between acceptance and rejection, once he has felt the impact of Western civilisation. This problem is superimposed on the one of local political commitment. And for a long time to come yet, such ironies are going to provide him with literary material. Unlike the whites, Negroes do not resist foreigners as such. They have adopted foreign techniques and, short of being dispossessed and being discriminated against, they are almost always ready to accept whites in their midst. But there are certain things they reject from the West, which have to do with a sense of values in such areas as behaviour patterns and human relationships. The next move is therefore the white politician's and the white voter's. In a non-racial society, will the white writer go farther than just an appreciation of or academic interest in, Negro cultures? Will he ever make an attempt to adopt certain Negro ways of life?

EVEN IF HE DEFERS DECISION for the moment, one day we shall all have to answer one way or another D. H. Lawrence's challenge—that the white man may forsake his "stream of consciousness" for the African's or the Hindu's, or the Polynesian's, or these races may take to the white man's; that one cannot

> express one stream in terms of another, so as to identify the two. . . . The only thing you can do is to have a little Ghost inside you which sees both ways, or even many ways. One man can belong to one great way of consciousness only. He may even change from one way to another. But he cannot go both ways at once. Can't be done. . . .

T. S. Eliot has said that conflict and diversity between cultures are essential so that allegiances and alliances in other areas may bring about cohesion in larger relationships. One wonders if he would sustain this argument if he were committed to living with Africans and Indians, say, in South Africa, where forced ethnic grouping heightens race conflicts and paralyses literary effort in particular and cultural growth in general. In any case, he abdicated this position at the end of his Notes in favour of unification under a Christian banner. D. H. Lawrence, I think, could write as he did about the Indians in Mexico because he was not committed to living with them.

In terms of the world into which I am emerging as an African Negro writer, it disturbs me enormously to see how Western culture is continually surrendering intellectual honesty and freedom. Not only have Boris Pasternak and Paul Robeson not been allowed to say things that offend authority in their respective countries, but allied countries have felt obliged to discontinue their patronage of these artists. If the autonomy of art means anything at all, it is that art should order our experiences and responses and help resolve conflicts inside ourselves as individuals in such a way that we each bring to our groups a personality that could never justify race, colour, and religious discrimination, intellectual dishonesty, poverty, and inequality of privilege.

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THEATRE

The Fully Considered Page

By Nigel Dennis

PROFESSOR Auden likes to reaffirm Paul Valéry's dictum: "I can say that I put *nothing* above *consciousness*. I would have given many masterpieces that I believed undeliberated for one evidently fully considered page."

Here is a text well fitted to worry the intellectual dramatist, for it insists that a writer must so sharpen his wits and grasp his own intentions as to raise himself to the level of a cook. Many playwrights, of course, would be astonished to hear that such a text was necessary; they themselves write with the clearest of consciousnesses and always know exactly what they mean by Mrs. X's adultery; her adultery, indeed, is usually all they *do* mean and it is not a conception that taxes the brain. Nor is consciousness much of a problem to the writer of naturalistic plays like *Roots*; for here, again, thought is kept to the very minimum and construction made as conventional as possible: the author can exploit his material with confidence and clarity because it is, literally, *not minded* to fight back. And the same goes, of course, for the rebellious playwright whose intention is primarily political: knowing, as he does, the answers to humanity's difficulties, he need never distract his consciousness with thoughtful worries and perplexities.

But in cases where a playwright abhors photographic representation and dreams of using the facts of life as stepping-stones into the artifices of the stage, the problem of consciousness becomes the most important one—so important and so daunting that the intellectual author may refuse to tackle it. Instead of giving his audience a "fully considered page," he will offer them a work wherein he has stopped at the very point where he was bound to begin—the point, that is to say, of following his own thoughts through to the end, organising them precisely, and presenting their most-complicated implications with the greatest clarity that he is capable of. If we wish to see impeccable modern examples of this "fully considered" intellectual art, we can find them, in miniature, in M. Eugene Ionesco's *The Chairs* or *The Lesson* and, full-sized, in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* or *Henry IV*. If we wish to see the same art in flawed form, with grave lapses from consciousness, we may examine Mr. Samuel Beckett's *End Game* or M. Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna*—or, to take a current example, Mr. N. F. Simpson's *One Way Pendulum*.

All the plays we have listed above are pure nonsense—rejections of life as it actually happens, denials of everyday commonsense, arrangements of exaggerated absurdities—honourable brethren, in short, of *King Lear*, *Everyman*, *The Bacchae*, *The Alchemist*, the Marx Brothers, *The Tempest*—we shall not extend the list for fear of overstressing the fact that the theatre is not a place where people behave sensibly. How much to Mr. Simpson's credit that he knows this! He is not, for example, a bit interested in presenting the whims and hobbies of people in the dull, erratic forms these take in private homes. He is passionately interested in distorting and exag-

NIGEL DENNIS, *the well-known novelist and playwright (author of* CARDS OF IDENTITY, THE MAKING OF MOO, *etc.) will be writing regularly on the theatre for* ENCOUNTER.

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gerating such tendencies until they are fit to appear before a paying public. We may show how he does so by saying that when we are at home, we stack up every empty used dish we can lay hands on and leave the "daily" to wash it all up: indeed, the Weskers of this world show *us* in the very act of *stacking*-up, and our *"daily"* in the very act of *washing*-up—"fiddling about with stage properties," the mature Strindberg called it (he had tried bacon on the stage in his youth). How much more dramatic is Mr. Simpson's way! In the most perfect segment of his farce, we watch the lady of the house stacking-up the dining-room table with every bit of food she can find. When there is no room for another morsel, in comes an enormous "daily," shaped much as a large dog's kennel, sits down, and starts devouring the lot. Her time ends before she can eat the asparagus; but her employer, all smiles, dismisses this shortcoming as a mere trifle which she can manage to eat herself; and she gravely pays the "daily's" wages with the usual words: "I think you'll find that's right."*

It is absolutely right! One calls this "the most-perfect segment" of the play because every moment of it is "fully deliberated." Mr. Simpson's consciousness is there all the time, his absurd idea is conceived, carried carefully upside-down to its ridiculous conclusion and made completely self-justifying. We see, in short, a good thinker commanding the fancies of his own wits and knowing exactly what he is doing with them. We see a person so "fiddling with stage properties" as to make the very act of so doing look perfectly ridiculous.

These things cannot be said of any other part of his play. We are happy to welcome a character who argues that if one weighing-machine can speak your weight, five hundred weighing-machines can sing *The Messiah*. We are delighted to find Mr. George Benson erecting a Build-It-Yourself Old Bailey in his living-room: what could suit this actor better? We even extend our arms to the girl who is obsessed to the point of misery by the shape and extent of her own arms, particularly as close study of her arms shows that there is nothing the matter with them at all. Indeed, with all the characters off to such a madly good beginning, what hopes can we fail to have of their lunatic ends?

BUT HERE, PRECISELY, IS THE PROBLEM of the intellectual dramatist. He must so organise his play that arms, Old Bailey, square "daily," and weighing-machines become a brilliant lattice-work of harmonising, developing obsessions. Mr. Simpson does what he can with the Old Bailey. But he refuses responsibility for nearly everything else. He refuses to be conscious of what he is doing because he finds it too difficult to work out. He will gladly make the lady's arms what they are, but will think of nothing for her to do with them.

The best way to understand the gravity of this intellectual failure—which is a failure of stamina, not of brain—is to suppose the author of Mrs. X pushing her into adultery and then dropping the whole matter: both producer and actors would beg him to pursue the affair further. If they have not done so with Mr. Simpson, it is partly because the material with which he works is so unlike the linen of the double-bed that nobody knows *how* it should be worked, partly because Valéry's standards were so very austere, and partly because the intellectual rejection of consciousness is becoming *habitual*. A producer dearly loves to know exactly what his author is up to; but by now he has begun to take for granted that many of the most intelligent authors are incapable of telling him. Thus, he must either reject their work altogether (and lose the very intelligence he is after) or try to stick the pieces together himself with the hope that his own direction may disguise the author's lack of one: this is what Mr. William Gaskell, stoutly backed by his actors, has done admirably for Mr. Simpson—so admirably, indeed, as to give the impression that the actors understand perfectly what they are doing.

It is a great achievement, of course, for a director to direct without having a direction, and actors to act as if they knew what they were acting. But this is not a proper solution, nor should respect for talented authors cause their incoherence not only to be tolerated but even, on occasion, welcomed as if it came from Jung himself. The laws of intellectual fantasy are stricter than ordinary laws, precisely because the demands they make on the human mind are so much more difficult than ordinary demands. They must in some way be firmly anchored to the ground, precisely because of their high-flying intentions. Indeed, if laws could be made in the matter, they would say:

> The greater the nonsense, the stricter the discipline.
> The greater the fantasy, the sturdier the base.
> The deeper the thought, the clearer the expression.

All such requirements are met in, for example, Swift's *A Voyage to Lilliput*. The nonsense is guarded throughout by unfailing gravity and normalcy of manner. The fantasy is anchored by repeated references to solid comparatives. Thus,

* The play opened at the Royal Court in December of last year, and was transferred to the Criterion in London last month.

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the King of Lilliput is not six inches high (because inches are themselves artifices), he is "taller, by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court," just as Gulliver's sword, as estimated by the Lilliputians, is "of the length of five men." As for the ideas in the book, Swift allows nothing that is not explicable in the simplest terms.

If we go a stage beyond Swift into the fantasy of Joyce, even here we find ourselves on a sort of graph paper: the author is not, after all, following a "stream of UNconsciousness," he is tracing minds that are moving incessantly in the limitless directions suggested by the sound and colour of words: this is the planned confusion of association, a roving according to rules.

But what, now, of the generation following Joyce—of Beckett in *End Game*? Here is an abstraction inspired by what is surely a most noble and heroic idea—a solitary human being enthroned in a cellar awaiting the end of the world. The very solid sight of him, rooted to his base, supplies fantasy with the weightiest sort of physical anchor. But what of discipline and clarity of expression? They come and go, just as they please—present only as long as the author chooses to be "conscious" of what he is doing. The parents of the enthroned man, in the dustbins beside him, lost their legs (we are told) in a bicycle accident in the Ardennes. We wonder why. We exchange promising symbols on the subject with our friends. We even reach the stage of wondering if the amputations can be connected in some way with German invasions of France through the Ardennes. Only after all this may it strike us that Mr. Beckett has cut off the parents' legs so as to make their trunks short enough to go in the dustbins: this suspicion is so discouraging that we pray it may be disproved. But by whom? Once an author has rejected M. Valéry's "consciousness," how is he to know why he has done something? Like his characters, he is without a leg to stand on.

THE consequences of unconsciousness are intensely interesting. The playwright, to begin with, is usually a decent enough fellow to return to consciousness whenever he can do so safely. Rather than see the producer have a nervous breakdown he will think of all sorts of jokes and even throw in little scenes that might just mean something to somebody: the producer then takes this padding and exhorts the actors to squeeze it as never before. All sorts of "business" can be invented to make the voids look full; the tempo can be increased when something quite empty lies ahead, so that the play will jump right over it like an accelerating springbok. It is most interesting to note that much of this is exactly the opposite of what happens in most plays about the adultery of Mrs. X. There, the author often *has* supplied *all* the necessary lines of continuity—and most of them are so abominably written that the producer and actors must invent "business" of all sorts to prevent the audience hearing them. Matches are struck, fires replenished, scuttles carried about, windows thrown open—everyone is a sexton doing his best to bury the author's dead. The entire inaudibility of most actors on the London stage completes the deception, and the audience leaves the theatre with an excellent impression of what they have seen, none whatever of what they have heard, and admiration for the wonderful way actors and actresses use their hands.

We are thus left with two notable theatrical extremes: authors who cannot write, but do, and authors who can write, but do not; authors who are conscious of what they are doing, because they cannot fail to be, and authors who are unconscious of what they are doing, because it is too hard to find out. Managements who produce the first sort of author, have no respect for him at all; while those who produce the second sort, have a great deal too much.

If this were the whole story, the problem of the intelligent producer would at least be clear. But there is more to it. We expect an intellectual author to raise questions that are difficult to understand. We expect his work to have overtones that he himself may not know about. We grant him the right to be more rational than at first appears—that is to say, we know that the more intelligent he is, the more difficult he may be to understand, regardless of how clearly he presents his case. In short, we must always distinguish between an apparent vagueness and a real clarity, and this is often extremely difficult.

But the author himself must take most of the cure, since he is the one who suffers from the disease. He may, like Shaw, Ionesco, and Pirandello, decide that clarity and continuity can be achieved only by taking a single idea and following it up with vigorous austerity. But if, moved by laudable ambition, he decides to spread himself, he must struggle manfully to keep his manifold activities as clear and as tight in unity as if they were the varying fingers of a single hand. His struggles to retain "consciousness" under such conditions will be exhausting and grim—indeed, it is likely that if Mr. Simpson *had* done his work properly, he would not be with us to-day. But of the play he would have left, we can hardly speak too highly.

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The Connection

IN A small off-Broadway theatre, one of the most exciting and disturbing theatrical experiences of the day is on offer. You climb a narrow flight of stairs ascending sharply from the pavement of Sixth Avenue, you cross a small tiled lobby decorated by a modern fountain, and you enter a long, low, darkened room, at one end of which, on a sort of raised platform (which is in effect the stage), you can make out a group of men, sleeping, dozing, staring ahead; some white, some Negro, all in various attitudes of exhaustion or expectancy. They wait: you wait. You wait for the play to begin: they wait for the connection to arrive—the connection being the last link in the long, devious, insecure chain between the organisation (if it exists) and "the junkie" (who certainly exists).

For this play, *The Connection*, the first work of a young and immensely gifted writer called Jack Gelber, is a play about dope, or as "the producer" (who makes periodic incursions into the action of the play) prefers to call it, "the anti-social habit" of drug-addiction.

But a warning. When I say that the play is about dope, I don't mean that it is reportage. Indeed *The Connection* is about as far from those half-banned plays and *X*-certificate films, two-a-penny in every city in the world, which claim to "reveal" or "unmask" vice, as Hamlet is from a detective-story. *The Connection* makes no sensational disclosures, it confides no secrets about the joys or pains of the narcotic dream-world. Indeed the play is extraordinary just on account of how little it reports, of its extreme meagreness in the way of background or "local colour." One of the most striking ways in which it offends against the canons of American culture is its extreme unfactuality, its refusal to stuff the spectator's greedy maw with raw experience. In the first act the junkies sit around, and talk and wait, and wait and talk, coming to unexpected life when the jazz starts to play, the jazz that comes out of their midst. At the very end of the act, the connection is detected, walking along with a sister from the Salvation Army. At the beginning of the second act, he is in the room, explaining how he brought along Sister Salvation to foil the police. One by one the junkies go out into the bathroom. They get their fix. They come back, they doze off, one of them insists on an overdose and has to be given artificial respiration. Otherwise, what happens? A pineapple is handed round, a boil is burst, some fine jazz is played, "the author" is initiated, and the play ends.

But if *The Connection* isn't a piece of reportage about drug-addiction, no more is it a problem-play about the subject. In the course of the evening we are introduced to a number of views concerning the existence and survival of this aberration. We are told, for instance, that drugs are a way of hope, of hope through oblivion. Again, we are told that drugs are nothing special: everyone is hooked, whether it's money, or vitamins, or work, or aspirins, and the only thing peculiar to heroin is that it happens to be illegal. On another view, the whole phenomenon is a racket, concocted to fill the pockets of the operators: "everything that's illegal is illegal because it makes more money for more people that way." But the suggestion of the play is that none of these theories needs to be taken very seriously: they are just part of the idle talk that surrounds any occupation or way of life that enforces long hours of leisure and indolence on its practitioners; and as for the way of life itself, drug-addiction, that is best regarded as some kind of natural phenomenon, an act of God, something that is with us and with us perhaps to stay. To many indeed it may seem that the rejection implicit in the play of any rational solution to the problem is unduly narrow and pessimistic. Drug-addiction, we might say, is treated here not as a problem but as a challenge. A challenge to us to display charity, love, understanding: and to display these virtues to people not because they are worse off than us (for who dare say that they are?) but because what is wrong with us is more apparent in them.

But if *The Connection* is not about dope in that it is not reportage about it, nor yet is it a problem-play around the subject, in another sense it is about drug-addiction in that it is about nothing else. We are presented with a world from which every other human interest or taste has been excluded: sex, art, thought, work, pleasure, food, comfort, humour, health—except in so far as these things relate to drugs. The only extraneous element that survives in the shadow of this great upas-tree is jazz: but that is only because jazz—we are made to feel—stands in some curiously intimate relation to narcotics so that by now it serves the junkie much as the bird-song does the bird, being his own, and marking his moods, and indicating his tribe. But outside jazz nothing survives in the world of *The Connection* save dope.

The characters themselves—and this is the author's great triumph—become comprehensible only in terms of their addiction. In what they do, above all in what they don't do or fail to do, they express themselves as addicts. Leach, "a queer without being queer" who "thinks like a chick"; Solly, who knows Greek and Hebrew and can talk about the Romans and the Navajos; Ernie, the psychopath, who might, or again might not, have once thrown a boy out

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— FABER & FABER —

of the window when he took an overdose of heroin—all are, of course, failures, even on their own terms: one a failed homosexual, the other a failed scholar, the third a failed hoodlum. And yet though none is quite what he could have been, each of them is somehow more than he might have been. Each of them has a fullness, an articulation of character, of the kind that is shaped in long idle hours of waiting and talking, and that would be rubbed flat by work and routine. So by some strange economy or compensation, everything that these pitiful inhabitants of Leach's pad possess, either in the way of success or failure, goes back to their addiction.

It is because the author succeeds in creating such a convincing image of a specific world—even though he deliberately rejects every illusionistic device, every trick of the naturalistic theatre—that he can then go on and ask us to treat this work as itself symbolical, as a representation or illustration of the larger world of which it is really a segment. He can ask us to do this with, to my mind, far greater authority than Beckett, because with Beckett the initial act of creation is less sure. Of course *The Connection* is not an allegory which allows of a simple reading. It is more like a picture in a psychological test on which we can project fears and disturbances, in this case fears and disturbances of a peculiarly modern kind, relating, for example, to the loss of freedom, to the stifling of human sympathy, to the fearful price at which alone human dignity can be maintained in an age of impersonality.

To a London audience, *The Connection* (I mean both Gelber's play and the fantastic acting and production of the Living Theatre) would come as a staggering revelation of the possibilities of contemporary theatre. And yet, regretfully, I wonder whether *The Connection* is an export article, whether in a city where addiction does not have the natural, almost inevitable quality it has in New York, the play would not appear melodramatic or shocking, whether its content would not be so intriguing that the tragedy would fail to come through.

Certainly the assessment, if not the understanding, of it is a parochial matter. *The Connection* belongs very much to the latest phase of its country's culture. In a way it is not literature; in a way it is not even discursive writing. It is more like a noise, a dreadful painful scream, beyond language though recognisably human, which comes out of a metropolis at once rich and rotting, where the forces of Progress, without eliminating either poverty or loneliness, have made one undignified and the other unendurable.

Richard Wollheim

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Proust and Self-Parody

By Stuart Hampshire

IT IS impossible that there should be any simple relation between *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* and the story of Proust's life. Proust's discovery, as he believed it to be, of the true relation of art to life, was to him the most important event of his own life, strictly analogous to a religious conversion. It was the discovery of the meaning of his existence, and his true destiny, after a long wandering in the desert. The desert was Society, in every possible meaning of that term. The novel is a testament, which tells the story of the narrator-pilgrim's search for truth through the false hopes and diversions in the desert up to the final revelation. From the beginning it is necessarily written in accordance with the æsthetic principles, of which the discovery is to be the climax of the book.

These principles require that only a "creative autobiography" (Mr. Painter's phrase), written in resolute solitude, can give the essence of any man's life, which is to be found in his unique mode of feeling and perceiving. Behind the straightforward narrative, the log-book of observable and successive events and conscious purposes, there lies a significant design to which we can have access only through the constructive imagination fed by unconscious memory. This buried music of recurring themes gives the true laws of an individual's development, the essence of a particular personality. This is the reality of which the phenomena recorded in the definitive biography are only the blurred signs. The individual essence of Proust's mind and sensibility cannot be communicated by any biographer, and according to Proust, a biographer would fall into the Sainte-Beuve fallacy if he tried to explain the character of the work by the story of Proust's life and of its historical circumstances. The story of his life is indeed part of the history of the times. History has its uses, and the greatest of them is to provide material for an individual's imagination to work on later. But *l'expérience vécue*, an individual's mode of consciousness, is not to be found in the history of his time. A literal summary of external events can never be a true account of that which any individual saw and felt; this truth can only be communicated in the metaphors and images and fictions that he himself will recognise with a shock of sudden pleasure as his own, and as answering to his own peculiar sensibility. The real life of a person can only be represented by imaginative parody of the subject's characteristic style of speech and writing and movement, if not by the subject's own shaping of his involuntary memories into the forms of art. Parody was the beginning of Proust's own gift as a writer; indeed he was a brilliant parodist and mimic when, before the discovery, he was still without any kind of formed style and method of construction of his own. After the discovery, he created the world of social comedy around the pilgrim, Marcel, by the exercise of this comedian's gift of absorbing alien personalities. Alone among his gifts as a writer, this came to him from nature and not from the mature philosophy that his incredible will later translated into action. Even for the exercise of this natural gift he found a philosophical justification. All art is parody, and the supreme art is self-parody, the concentration in some satisfying form of one's own hitherto unconscious, and apparently trivial, irrationalities. The rational element in feeling and behaviour is superficial and cannot be the material of art; for art is concerned only with that which is individual and not with generalities applicable to all men.

Mr. Painter has written a biography* which, on the evidence of this first volume, will be a

* *Marcel Proust*. By GEORGE D. PAINTER. Chatto & Windus. 30s.

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masterpiece of its kind. There is no aspect of the relation of Proust's life to his work that he has not carefully considered. He has plainly taken Proust's thought seriously, and respected it in the design of his own work. Proust's philosophy required *A la Recherche* to reproduce the essential "laws" of the author's individual consciousness, the irrational themes and cross-references that from the beginning shaped his relationships in love, his friendships, his perceptions, and his style. If Proust can find the fitting form for the recurring themes of his own consciousness, the reader will both enter into Proust's world, which must be unlike any other, and will at the same time be shown the only way into his own individual consciousness, past the barriers of habit and stock response and social convention. Art is the expression of these recurring patterns within individual consciousness, and our response to art is a recognition of similarly discoverable, but characteristically different, submerged rhythms within ourselves. Proust despised æstheticism and formalist theories of art, doctrines that are comforting only to the idle and unproductive connoisseurs, to *"les célibataires de l'art."* His philosophy makes art essentially cognitive, an uncovering of a kind of truth that cannot be discovered by any rational method. The essential virtue of a serious novelist, painter, or musician is a persevering truthfulness, a loyalty to the unexplained details of moving significance that he finds within his experience, when he disregards everything that is habitual, rational, and socially conditioned in his own perceptions. Like Schopenhauer, Proust uses the language of Platonic Ideas, which can be perceived by a child or an artist, peering with an exaggerated curiosity at the flux of his experience when the will to act is morbidly relaxed. It follows that the biographer of an artist, and in particular of Proust, is committed to reversing this process of artistic creation, and to restoring all the accidental features of the subject's experience which he himself had winnowed away.

MR. PAINTER's first volume, and particularly its earlier chapters, are indeed a fascinating demonstration in reverse of the working of Proust's imagination. In the unobtrusively learned reconstruction of the scenes and names around Illiers, we are for the first time given the full prose sources of the philosophical poetry of Swann and of the Guermantes Way. Gradually, comparing the accidents of Proust's experience with the essence that he extracted from it, one begins to see exactly where the peculiar stresses and distortions of his imaginative reconstruction fall.

First, he always saw people and scenes, and his own moods and passions, with a microscopic intensity. The normal, middle-distance view of human comedy is altogether lacking in the novel, and is restored in the biography. The effect of this magnifying-glass intensity is that there can be no true picture in the novel of human beings purposefully doing things, engaged in the common business of their professions, or pursuing definite purposes. There is no account of sustained action, or of any planned achievement, anywhere in the novel. The normal dimension of time has to be removed. He has therefore no use for a plot as the organising principle of his novel; for a plot presents a personality through the history of its activities, and this is no less superficial than mere psychological analysis, which was the fashionable principle of fiction in his time. One can now see why it was a condition of the full development of Proust's sensibility that he should spend his life among the professionally idle and frivolous, in Society, and that he should at all costs escape from his father's active, and responsible, professional world. His characters must live and develop as a plant lives and develops, according to some secret law of growth putting out new fronds of self-expression. They are caught under close observation at different times, but they can never be seen from a distance in the steady trajectory of their continuous activities and reasonable aims. Proust's own favourite and marvellous metaphors in describing personal, and particularly sexual, life are botanical metaphors. His characters are attracted to each other, intertwine and destroy each other, with the monstrous and irresistible luxuriance of tropical plants. We never see them moving, but we find them in new postures as we walk up and down the great conservatory.

Mr. Painter describes adequately, with humour but without intimacy, the personalities of Parisian society whom Proust transfigured, by making from his memories and mimicry of them that strange jungle world of bizarre attraction and interleavings that is at once comical and repellent. There can be no doubt that Proust's art passes the test that he imposed upon all art: we have a far more vivid sense of the permanent and inescapable reality of the fictional characters—particularly of Charlus, Bloch, and Saint-Loup—than of any single one of Mr. Painter's shadowy figures of lighter social comedy. Perhaps the competition between art and history is not being quite fairly tested, since more could probably have been done to make such people as Lucien and Léon Daudet, Barrès, Montesquieu, Reynaldo Hahn, Anna de Noailles, Jacques-Émile Blanche, Madame Straus, probably some others, seem real and interesting. But even when every allowance is

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made for Mr. Painter's willed, and also his involuntary, remoteness from the social scene that he describes, the density and permanence of the social milieu created by Proust from these scattered materials is astonishing. He has presented a timeless image of Society, because he has made his image exact in all its particular details. The great gap between *Jean Santeuil*, which is largely incompetent, uncertain, and formless as a work of art, and *A la Recherche*, is explained by Proust himself in *Le Temps Retrouvé*. Before his philosophical discovery, he had no means of fusing the particular and the general in a single design. The imaginative memories and the general reflections lie side by side, "like an object with a price-label attached to it."

THERE is no comparable instance in modern literature of a writer discovering his own genius, late in life, through the discovery of a theory, and then exercising this genius, and proving the theory, by representing his earlier, uncreative life as a progress under destiny towards this discovery. It is as if the insights and the intellectual excitement to be found in Flaubert's letters had been woven into the texture of *Madame Bovary*, or of *L'Education Sentimentale*, instead of their being merely applied in these works. We cannot find the minds of Flaubert and of Stendhal, in their full range, completely expressed in their fiction; we have also to read Flaubert's letters and *La Vie de Henry Brulard*. Their own understanding of the sources and significance of their own work is to be found there, and is not absorbed within the work itself as a necessary part of its picture of experience. That Proust's letters should be found for the most part trivial and disappointing is one more evidence of the supreme strategy of his life, of his patience and cunning as an artist. In general the greatest fiction of the last century, and particularly Tolstoy's, gives an inadequate, and even falsified, picture of human existence because it omits both the sources and the value of its own creation. The moral values are thereby made more simple and unambiguous than they were in Tolstoy's own experience. This is the dishonesty of fiction. We cannot really be deceived by the rhetoric of *"Madame Bovary, c'est moi,"* or be persuaded to identify spoiled romanticism with the labouring self-consciousness which so painfully put together the essential image of it. The work that made the picture cannot be allowed to have no place in the picture itself. Proust himself expressly noticed the added depths of works of art that represent also the conditions of their own creation. He felt a particular affinity with Vermeer, who painted the artist seated at his easel, bathed in the light that he must represent, with a mirror beyond him, reflecting the scene. This poetry of inner and answering reflections, and of self-commentary, gives his novel its strength and density, its life-like completeness and two-facedness. The gap between art and experience has been closed by showing their common source in the hidden depths of the narrator's dreams and involuntary memories, and by showing his heroic struggle to realise in a transparent form the submerged patterns in his consciousness, which alone have given some unity and unique significance to his otherwise dissipated life.

The validity of this æsthetic philosophy, and its success in application, have become easier to appreciate after reading the first volume of this biography, which is not only more complete than its predecessors, but is also free from moral prejudice, charm, and sentimentality. We can at least try to separate that which is due to æsthetic principle and that which is due to accidents of temperament and circumstance. We may for the first time judge why Proust fell short (if it is to be admitted that he did) of the full universality at which he aimed through the disengagement of the essential themes in his own life. The first problem here seems to me his inability to represent the enjoyment of action and the normal rhythms of experience with its natural human continuity. In *Le Temps Retrouvé*, rationalising the peculiarity of his own passive temperament, he firmly declares action, and the need for action, to be marks of mediocrity of mind. At this point he is gratefully accepting the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Bergson, against Taine and Zola, and against naturalists and positivists of all kinds, who were no less his enemies than the contemporary æsthetes. But are the passivity of the narrator in love and jealousy, his intent listening to the slight movements of ebb and flow in his own consciousness, really the substitutes for enjoyment of action in a man who is always lying in a bed of sickness, either in fact or in his own imagination? The narrator is from the beginning a sleepless observer, peering at the spectacle before him, enclosed within a vegetable, trance-like world of dreams and drugs, in which the crisis is always a moment of hyperæsthesia, a moment of some special lucidity, and never the sense of agency and of decision. The narrator has only one adult decision to make, as a free agent, and that is the decision finally to write. This is atonement for his fateful decision as a child to call and keep his mother in his room at night when the guests came, and so to yield to the anxiety that would prevent him from living a normal active life and that would prepare him for his vocation. Perhaps Mr. Painter will in his second volume review the evidence about the nature and effects of Proust's illness, on which some work

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has been done in France. *"Les malades se sentent plus près de leur âme"* were Proust's own words. But there is a certain degree of presence of soul, and absence of the sense of physical circumstance, which makes some pages of *A la Recherche* seem more like a case-book study than a universal truth about experience presented in a poetical and concrete image. The animal soul, man as a coarse sanguine physical agency, so real in Tolstoy, does not appear at all alongside the vegetative and intellectual parts of the soul. Therefore the whole of Nature becomes insubstantial and emblematic, a diaphanous veil through which spiritual truths can be discerned. There is nothing real outside the single room, except the view from the window, perhaps of Gilberte's snow in the Champs Elysées, or the noises that come through the walls in the early morning with their message of the unattainable sunlight outside.

MR. PAINTER'S brilliantly constructed first volume makes a continuation to almost all the problems of interpreting Proust's work in relation to his life: his homosexuality; the extent of Ruskin's influence; his intense desire for recognition and for ordinary literary success; the complex reasons for his guilt in relation to his parents, and its connection with his view of literature as an expiation for life; the composite sources of his names and characters. The learning is wonderfully absorbed in the lightness of the style. Mr. Painter has no desire to censure or to defend Proust, unlike his predecessors, or to censure or to defend the society of which he was part. Apart from the story of his illness and of his relation with his parents, the character of this society, which was his material, is the next point of great significance in his biography. This was the society that surrounded an efflorescence of varied genius in the arts, perhaps the greatest efflorescence that Europe has seen since the Renaissance. Like Henry James in England, Proust saw both its corruption and its vindication, as he thought, in the heroism of the Great War, and, towards the end of *A la Recherche*, he began consciously to write its epitaph, in the form of a *Comédie Humaine*. Reading the biography, and then re-studying Proust, one is at many points forced to acknowledge an element that is untranslatably French, and not conceivably relevant to England, in Proust's judgment on society and of the place of art and of the artist in society. The universal truth in its concrete image is sometimes too particularly French. Perhaps this is partly due to the peculiarities of the society in Paris which Mr. Painter describes, and partly to the literary heritage that formed Proust's style and vision. When he was moved to tears by George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, he may have found the picture of society in their novels almost as poetically strange as in the *Arabian Nights*.

That which is untranslatably French in Proust's own vision comes from the tradition of the French moralists, which formed the main line of French fiction, as the example of Shakespeare formed the main line of English fiction. It is essential to this moralists' tradition that it takes, first, the Court, and then its bourgeois successor, the drawing-room, as the contexts in which the essence of human nature is displayed: and, connectedly, the problem of human nature, and therefore the proper subject of fiction, is human vanity, that despairing word which echoes through French prose from Pascal to Proust. For two centuries the standard subject of French fiction had been the essence and metamorphoses of human vanity in love and in politics. The essential action takes place within four walls, with the hero either arriving painfully at true self-knowledge, or, as engineer of his fate, playing upon that intricate mechanism of vanity which is the universal principle of motion in society, as gravitation in the material world. Although he extends its range and adds depth to its conclusions, Proust remains unalterably part of this moralists' tradition, the Saint-

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Simon of bourgeois society, as he recognised, who had to find the extravagant vanities, and consequent cruelties, of the Court in the drawing-rooms of Paris. The famous, sometimes tedious, phenomenon of snobbism, as it appears in Proust, is the descendant of contested Court precedence surviving in a capitalist and mobile society, and the reversal of social values at the end of the novel follows closely the rise of the bastards in Saint-Simon. The narrator's own deliverance from love and from social ambition, and his redemption through art, is one more version, and a deeper one, of the classical hero's escape from vanity into self-knowledge, the theme that is endlessly repeated in French literature from the 17th century onwards.

IT IS possible at moments to yawn, to feel stifled within the four walls of self-examination, and to be irritated by these always gleeful probings of the varieties of human vanity. It is possible to regard Courts, and born courtiers like Proust, as aberrations from the norm, and to look for the natural scenes for full self-expression elsewhere and not in society at all. It is possible to take the Puritan and Protestant family, contemptuous of Court and courtiers, attached to its locality and possessions, as the natural scene of human self-expression, and the act of marriage, the foundation of a family, as the natural centre of any human story. It is possible also to demand that fiction, whether tragedy or comedy, should never be too concentrated upon a single theme or situation, but rather be dissipated by incidents and allusions that will show something of the greater natural and social order outside the window, away from the individual consciousness, in the open air. These are protests which arise immediately from any Englishman's experience of literature, whether he chooses to suppress them or not. He may also find Proustian snobbism, descended from the snobbism of courtly precedence and protocol, remote from the familiar English snobbery, in which the successive layers of aristocracy have been generally less significant than the many degrees of gentlemanliness, obscurely and locally recognised along many different scales. He may therefore finally turn from Proust to Turgenev, Chekhov, and Tolstoy, to pictures of a society that was far more unlike his own, and yet find their presentation of men's natural conditions and purposes, their moral tone, their distrust of intellect and formality, their seeming untidiness and indefiniteness of mood and feeling, their religious sense of Nature, nearer to his experience and education in many respects than anything in Proust, except the scenes of childhood. The difference between the two national traditions in fiction is no doubt partly a difference between forms of social life, and of religion, in the two countries and also partly a difference of æsthetic principles. But neither of these factors is independent of the other, and all the interesting differences lie on this perplexing borderline. Mr. Painter's brilliant book will illuminate this borderline, together with many other issues which I have not been able to mention.

Critique of Freud

Freud: the Mind of the Moralist. By PHILIP RIEFF. *Gollancz.* 30s.

THERE is a subtle precision about Mr. Rieff's sub-title. Had he set out to explore not the mind but the moral implications of Freud's theories a woollier book would almost certainly have resulted, though not, perhaps, a less interesting one. It used to be said that Freud had upset our morale in the same way that Marx and Frazer had done—by contributing to that general undermining of the concept of free-will which has been such a notable intellectual process of our times. A book which began with this thesis would soon have sailed into the choppy philosophical waters of free-will and determinism, and left the text of Freud far behind. Mr. Rieff does, indeed, touch on this topic here and there, but it is not central to his theme. A great merit of his book is that he keeps so closely to the text of his subject, takes wing from it so seldom on gaudy flights of his own. Much of the book, in fact, is a re-statement of Freud's multitudinous positions in terms of singular lucidity. This transposition of terms is a great achievement, for the new ones are free from any kind of jargon, often epigrammatic in the best sense, and illuminating in a positively creative way. Indeed this book would be justified by its exegetical aperçus alone; which is one way of saying that Mr. Rieff writes quite exceptionally well.

> Freud appears as a defender of the beleaguered power of reason.
>
> Conscience, not passion, emerges as the last enemy of reason.
>
> Nevertheless, while aiming to annul the discriminatory powers of conscience, analysis may itself hurt and excoriate. The therapy manufactures a new sort of conscience, one which demands a more accurate and yet more scrupulous self-centredness.
>
> . . . the Freudian piety towards the sinister.

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. . . the alternative explanation always lurking at the edge of every psychoanalytic interpretation.

Every work of art is to Freud a museum-piece of the unconscious, an occasion to contemplate the unconscious frozen into one of its possible gestures.

In Freud's view, however generously he invested Eros with meaning, there remains a bankruptcy clause; his doctrine amounts to an unremitting chastisement of the "sacred" on behalf of the "profane" (or animal) love.

He acknowledges no neutralist emotions in either public or private life.

Thus, in Christianity the sense of guilt is characteristically a sign of augmented moral delicacy; in Freudian psychology the sense of guilt is a source of private illness.

Indeed, because in his case-histories Freud never *reported* but *interpreted* them, what passes for description in the Freudian method is already judgment.

All experience is symptomatic now.

Neurosis is the penalty for ambition unprepared for sacrifice.

To make delicacy of feeling, not the lack of it, the problem of our health discloses how near Freudian psychology drifts to a sophisticated primitivism.

Being honest, admitting one's nature, does not resolve specific issues of choice. The Freudian ethic emphasises freedom at the expense of choice.

Such careful and detailed concentration on the self as Freud encourages may more often produce pedants of the inner life than virtuosi of the outer one.

This is the meaning of the psychoanalytic re-education Freud speaks of. In the emergent democracy of the sick, everyone can to some extent play doctor to others, and none is allowed the temerity to claim that he can definitely cure or be cured. The hospital is succeeding the church and the parliament as the archetypal institution of western culture.

I make no excuse for this long necklace of quotations; it seems to me that the phrases are sufficiently gem-like to deserve such treatment and that the mind of Mr. Rieff is revealed more clearly by this method than by any amount of paraphrase. For all its courtesy and cunning Mr. Rieff's book adds up to heavy indictment of Freud. He is himself a sociologist, but his book is remarkably free from the current jargon of that trade, and from its many over-arrogant presuppositions. He remarks with approval that "Freud . . . kept some part of character safe from society, restoring to the idea of human nature a hard core, not easily warped or re-shaped by a social experience." And it is no part of Mr. Rieff's thesis to throw doubts on that hard core, or to reduce that "piety towards the sinister" which he discovers throughout Freud's work, and in spite of the caustic doubts implied by his remark that "all experience is symptomatic now."

Mr. Rieff has been attacked for being himself guilty of a fault which he discovers at the very foundations of Freud's thought. "The psychological foundation of religion," writes Mr. Rieff, "at which Freud aimed his attack appears at first too familiar to bear reviewing. In brief, he refurbished the old fallacy that the genotype of belief repeats the phenotype of dependence, and the more general fallacy that the origin of a thing determines its end." It is true that Mr. Rieff is himself at pains to place Freud in the context of his times, heavily influenced by scientific rationalism on the one hand and by the neo-romanticism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on the other. But it does not seem to me that he makes, after this, the logical solecism of which he accuses Freud. The point is that even the most widely accepted of Freud's conclusions remain, by their nature, unproven. Even within the chosen terms there is always that "alternative explanation" which "lurks at the edge of every psychoanalytic interpretation." Outside the Freudian terms there are, of course, as many psychological explanations of human thought and action as there are minds to discover or invent them. Mr. Rieff puts Freud in an intellectual context not as a means of disproving his theories but as a means of suggesting why he chose one set of explanations among the infinite number which are always available.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY Freudian attempts to withdraw their subject from the legitimate domain of public criticism. I remember an article by Dr. Glover in which he castigated the lay interest in psychoanalytical theory on the grounds that it was a question of therapy and of nothing else. It was implied that the layman, or the subject of a different intellectual discipline, had no more right to criticise a method of mental therapy than to criticise, let's say, the theory and practice of leucotomy. This won't do. It is not only that Freud himself deliberately poached in every direction—on art, on anthropology, on religion, on history, on ethics and philosophy; it is also that a theory of the human mind *inevitably* intrudes on all the human sciences and on all the humanities. Freud is impossible to disregard because the implications of his ideas break outwards like a great tidal wave and threaten to swamp everyone who is in any way concerned with the study of man. Ultimately, therefore, it

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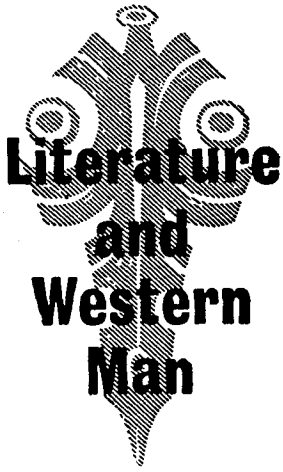

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is as a sociologist that Mr. Rieff makes his final criticism.

He begins, as always, by paying scrupulous respect to Freud's positive achievement in this field.

> First (Freudianism) de-classified human society, creating an essential democracy within the human condition. Even the Greek tragedy—the most aristocratic context—was levelled out by Freud; the unique crime of the tragic hero becomes an intention in every heart, and in the most ordinary of plots, the history of every family. . . . Secondly, to say that all men are neurotic means to imply an injunction to tolerance. . . . It lightens the heavier burdens of guilt and responsibility, for many offences can be made to appear smaller if perceived in sufficient depth. . . . Third, and most important, this conception of neurosis reveals the essentially ethical nature of Freud's idea of normality. Normality is not a statistical conception, for the majority is no longer normal. Normality is an ethical ideal, pitted against the actual abnormal.

And yet, in two earlier passages, Mr. Rieff has already taken much of the gilt off this belated piece of gingerbread. He has shown that the political implications of Freudian theory involve a dichotomy between society and the individual which is not only harmful but which corresponds only to one portion of the facts. There are, of course, many contradictions in Freud's attitude to society, and it would be possible to draw from them almost any political and social conclusions. But Mr. Rieff believes that if a final lesson can be drawn it would be one of sophisticated and instructed acceptance of things as they are.

> Analogues with the personal such as Freud draws serve to debunk all public pieties. The sentiment of patriotism may be exposed as a resolution of sibling rivalry, the aims of revolution parodied as regressive disobedience. Nothing could have a greater appeal to educated classes in the West, tired as they are of the taxing sincerities involved in political engagement.

This is a comparatively rare example of Mr. Rieff showing his own hand—a comparatively rare example of implications being drawn too rashly and of the author's personal distastes standing in the place of intellectual refutation or acceptance. He is on much surer ground when he returns to his usual method. "Freud did say that his was a psychology both individual and social, that individual and social philosophy were the same. But the parts of his analogy are not equivalent; the reference is always from society back to the individual, from the manifest public (act) to the latent private (emotion). His interest in the social consistently mirrors his concern with the individual."

It is, of course, this very prejudice, or preference, which endears Freud to so many artists, romantics, misfits, and solitaries who find the increasing burden of society unbearable. Mr. Rieff has himself paid this tribute in his very first pages. "By its programme of extended and painstaking attention to the intangibles of a person's entire life and thought, psychoanalysis pays rare tribute to the interest of the individual and to the rich ambiguity of human character." It is to this element in Freud that many of us will cling, or at least return, in spite of our recognition that we are indeed social creatures as well as individuals and that Freud had little that is useful to say to us in this secondary capacity.

Mr. Rieff has followed both the main lines and the many divagations of Freud's thought with a most revealing assiduity. His is a book to buy and to study.

Philip Toynbee

End of a Demagogue

Senator Joe McCarthy. By Richard Rovere. *Methuen.* 18s.

Dick Rovere is the finest contemporary exponent of his own branch of the art of reportage—an art more highly developed in the United States than anywhere else. He is not a newsman like James Reston, or an analyst like Walter Lippman, but a literary engraver of the contemporary scene, a Daumier in print, in the manner of Henry Adams and H. L. Mencken. He combines that graphic quality which distinguishes the best American journalism from the best British, with a capacity for taking pains with fine points of detail, which is more often found here than there. And the story of the rise and fall of Joe McCarthy is the one that he was born to tell.

For my personal taste, he has done too good a job. I had not read beyond the second chapter before the palms of my hands began to feel clammy and I felt "sick" as Joe himself used to say—"sick way down inside." For it brought back, as a chance event in the daylight world can cause a spasm of fear by recalling an ancient nightmare, the full horror of those years in Washington, when the whole framework of confidence and national dignity was crumbling, which it was my unhappy privilege, in company with many others, to record.

I had to go to the State Department every

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week and throughout 1953 and 1954 one could see the morale of its officials falling like a sinking barometer as Dulles threw one victim after another off the sleigh in an effort to stop the wolf, and in the Pentagon it was even worse. McCarthy and his shadow pervaded every corner of Washington life during those years, and I can remember a reception for the Queen Mother at the British Embassy at which the sole topic of conversation from Supreme Court Justices to Third Secretaries was whether McCarthy would show up to shake her hand. Whenever one went to the Capitol, one always encountered him sidling or blundering down a corridor with his bulging brief-case full of meaningless photostats, the furtive boozy smile, the slap on the back (he always called me Wilson but he knew I was a journalist and therefore worth greeting), and the air of a small boy acknowledging that he was up to mischief, which made it impossible to preserve the dignified hostility that should have been one's proper bearing. The most humiliating thing of all was that I knew I could always make the front page, even of a sophisticated British newspaper, by writing about him, so I wrote about him, conforming to the cruel Gresham's law of journalism that "bad news drives out good." (There was at one moment a co-ordinated attempt by the leading American newspapers deliberately to relegate him to the back pages, but it lasted less than a week, for the man *was* news even though he manipulated it.) Not the least of his powers was his ability to bring out the worst in oneself, and he ruled, like other demagogues, by his skill in sowing confusion among his enemies.

This is the most penetrating study of McCarthy that has been, or is likely to be, written. McCarthy was, as Rovere points out, a nihilist whose lust was not for power, for he had no ambitions in the ordinary political sense, but for glory. He was not a conservative, nor a radical, but the most supreme opportunist of modern times.

> It is ironic in any case that this Typhoid Mary of conformity was himself a rebel by nature, a flouter of conventions and orthodoxies. In his time, he was the least conformist of politicians. He followed no leader and stamped with no herd. He was a chronic oppositionist, a dissenter for dissent's sake; he had to depart from every majority and to attack every authority. He never thought positively. He denounced the very institutions that are customarily thought of as the fortresses of American conformity: the Army, the Protestant clergy, the press, the two major parties, the civil service. And of course he attacked by his very existence the conformities of American politicians. He never affected the pieties of a Dwight Eisenhower. He made little pretence to religiosity or to any species of moral rectitude. He sought to manipulate only the bar-

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baric symbols of "Americanism"—the slippery-elm club, the knee in the groin, and the brass knuckles, but never motherhood or the love of a man for a cocker spaniel, blueberry pie, or honest toil, or the bitch goddess. He was inner-directed. He was closer to the hipster than to the Organisation Man. He reached the heights at a time when the rules of politics were being re-written by public-relations and advertising men, opinion samplers, professional elocutionists like Robert Montgomery, and the moguls of television. . . .

Rovere is right to emphasise that many of the analyses that have subsequently been made of McCarthyism tend to relegate the man too much to the background as a symptom rather than a cause of national malaise, and to ignore the brilliance of McCarthy's own performance. But for a demagogue to do the harm that he did, to shake the whole structure of a vast society, and not merely its political centre, needs an unusual conjunction of the man and the moment. And in analysing the background against which McCarthy operated, I am surprised that Rovere has not given greater weight to the effect of the Korean war on American opinion. It seems to me no accident that McCarthy's four years of glory began only a few months before the outbreak of war and ended within a year of the signing of the Armistice. For a good case can be made for saying that Korea created a greater internal lesion, and upset the epic conception of American destiny on which the nation's children had been reared for generations, more than any event since the Civil War. Here was a campaign fought with only token support from America's allies against the loved-hated Chinese, with a very high rate of casualties, on the ground, in bitter conditions, under restraints which made technical superiority of the United States of little value, and ending not in victory but in stalemate. It was, as Denis Brogan pointed out, the end of "the illusion of American omnipotence." The experience was so un-American, that to many plain folk, to most, I suspect, of the 50 per cent of opinion whom the polls recorded as approving McCarthy's activities, it must be anti-American and therefore the work of traitors in foreign pay. McCarthy himself took virtually no interest in Korea but it was his seed-bed, and I personally doubt if the general tension of the post-war years would have given McCarthy the springboard he needed. For it was only when the forces of American conservatism (the liberals were powerless from the start) had realised that the humiliation of Korea was not the end of the United States, that they were able to pull themselves together sufficiently to wrest from him the command of the Army, the power to terrorise the State Department and to immobilise the White House.

Rovere calls McCarthy "the most gifted demagogue ever bred on these shores," and if France can contribute Boulanger, we have our own contribution to make, a man whose power arose from the conjunction of his own fraudulent genius with external circumstances, not unlike those of the early 1950s in the United States, and whose career, *vide* the brief account in the *Concise D.N.B.*, offers a remarkable parallel to the story that is unfolded in this book.

OATES, TITUS (1649–1705), perjurer; expelled from Merchant Taylor's school during his first year there . . . imprisoned at Dover in consequence of his making a disgraceful charge against a Hastings schoolmaster; escaped before the trial and became a naval chaplain: expelled from the navy: as chaplain to the Protestants in the Duke of Norfolk's household first came in contact with Papists . . . fabricated the "popish" plot which he affirmed before Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, 1678, his revelation being in effect that Charles II was to be killed and the country administered by the Jesuits: alleged that the details had been settled at a "general consult" held at the White Horse Tavern, Fleet Street; summoned to repeat his story before the Privy Council: implicitly trusted, in consequence of Godfrey's murder; his evidence corroborated by William Bedloe and others, the result being that about thirty-five men were judicially murdered; lost prestige . . . tried for perjury, May, 1685, and condemned . . . his sentence reversed and himself set at liberty: married a rich widow, 1693, but was allowed £500 to pay his debts and a pension of £300 a year. . . .

"A cry of 'Popery' (I quote Defoe from memory) will bring a hundred thousand men to horse not knowing whether the Pope is a man or a dog." As with Oates, so with McCarthy, the harm that the great demagogue can do, survives long after the external dangers which gave him his opportunity have passed away. It is a strange reflection that this man, who died in his forties, who held the spotlight only for four years, who had no belief in the cause which he espoused, may be judged by the historian to have had as great an effect upon the course of American history as the long-lived, tough, intelligent men, Marshall and Truman, Acheson and Dulles, whom he reduced for a time to silence or impotence.

Alastair Buchan

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Tennyson, New and Nondescript

Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson. Edited by JOHN KILLHAM. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* 28s.

AN element in the self-training of anyone who criticises Tennyson should perhaps be a trip to Killarney or to the Königsee. There, disarmed of Empson or of Cleanth Brooks, he should embark, and wait upon the reflective water for the bugler to blow his bugle at the overhanging mountains and for the moment when the echoes reply—

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Indeed if I were a literary magistrate, I would willingly sentence nearly all the essayists in this volume (the editor included) to the trip. It should be one by one at their own expense—and for preference, to Killarney where in fact Tennyson heard the echoes of the bugle in 1850, before writing his lyric; and it might—it might ensure that, New or Nondescript, they would at last acquire a pinch of what they now lack so damagingly—that sense-experience which is required for appreciating and criticising feats of sensory statement.

This is not so trivial as it seems. Tennyson is a considerable, if not a great, poet, precisely when he most succeeds in conveying a life emotion by means of a parallel effect upon his (and upon our own) senses. The mountains above the Killarney Lakes or the Königsee thrillingly return a run of clear echoes. The clear echoes thrillingly die away; which is the song—the siren song of transience—Tennyson always heard. One of the less irritating contributors to this book, Mr. Graham Hough, defines that siren song as one which was "about absence, distance, desolation, partings, forsakings"—echoes of which (he says "echoes" indeed) "can be heard in all of his verses from *Mariana* in 1830 to *Far, Far Away* almost sixty years later."

A few of them excepted, these essays do not deal, their authors are simply unequipped to deal, with so much as we can discern of the total genetics of a poem or a stream of poems through a poet's life. I think a reader could presuppose this defect from the opening sentences of nasty English in which each of them is written. Manipulation so drab could hardly cope with a poetic manipulation above the skill of a Martin Tupper.

Even so, the essayists might have tried a little more intelligently. They have a source, a fountain of critical suggestion, since it can hardly be doubted that every one of them, English, American, or Canadian, has at some time put his mouth to Mr. T. S. Eliot's paper of 1936. Mr. Eliot (whose conclusions about Tennyson are printed once more in this disagreeable company) called him "the great master of metric as well as of melancholia." He thought that no poet in English had ever had "a finer ear for vowel sound, as well as a subtler feeling for some moods of anguish."

How much has this aboriginal wisdom been exploited? The company agree on the whole that Tennyson must be less grudgingly reinstalled. They refer to Tennyson's melancholia, Tennyson's anguish, they discuss images, meaning, symbolism, mythology, tensions of a private poet and public seer, inner feeling and anxious though contradictory ratiocination. But poems as sensory statements they avoid. Melancholia, but no metrics; anguish, but no language; life situations, but not the results of stimulus; views of life, but not *poems*. Generalisations, not particulars. "I intend"—and a despair supervenes at the prospect of yet another such examination —"to examine a very late poem . . . in the light of these generalisations."

Frequently as well Tennyson is on the pedigree. He is fixed there for the sake of those who preceded him or those who have followed him, who in their turn are doomed, somewhere else, to be dealt with to explain predecessors and followers. Never poetry for tea to-day. So Tennyson is a point, a pause between Thomson's *Seasons* and *Finnegans Wake*. "The pervasiveness of the sense of romance in Theocritus and Tennyson, so clearly woven into their idylls, needs much more attention, if only for the sake of illumination"—hell—"of the work of Yeats, Pound, and Eliot."

Concerning itself mostly with the poems, with the objects made of speech, the more useful criticism would realise (especially in dealing with such a poet as Tennyson) that verbal, and metrical, and total result are unified in a structure, in a poem, not only by the stimulus of other words, but by other stimuli of the senses, from the echoes of the Killarney bugle to the familiar pattering of the horse chestnut through the fading leaf.

That Eliot has not been seriously but only superficially exploited in these New and Nondescript criticisms of Tennyson is the worse because Tennyson can be praised and assailed most upon sensory grounds, precisely vis-à-vis "external nature." This fact is explored in one essay, incompletely, awkwardly, pedantically, and with unacknowledged borrowings (not only from Eliot), but still explored. In *Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry*, Mr. H. M. McLuhan ex-

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hibits Tennyson approaching and describing "nature," but not managing to involve himself (compare Hopkins—or Shakespeare, for that matter) in nature; not managing to wrestle himself into nature, altogether against, so to say, the will of that tough complexity which has no will. He might have quoted Allingham's record of Tennyson on showers and cloud and rainbow:

> Tuesday, December 24th, 1867. Irish landscape "I saw wonderful things there—twenty different showers at once in a great expanse—a vast yellow cloud with a little bit of rainbow stuck on one corner. . . . I wish I could bring these things in."

He does quote Hallam on poets who "absorb their whole being into the energy of sense," in contrast to poets who "seek for images to illustrate their conceptions"; and on Tennyson's "vivid, picturesque *description* of objects." And he does say (an exaggeration of a necessary statement) that it is now Tennyson "of the precise ear and eye who will provide—with a 'recovered reading ability'—the most unexpected and persistent enjoyment." Yes—but external nature also includes language; "yellow apple" is no less two objects, separate or in connection, than a yellow apple is one object; and Tennyson—which is an ultimate bar to greatness in this master of vowel-sound and melancholia—also approached language, instead of absorbing himself into its energy. He "brought it in." Only the editor in this dismally evasive or misdirecting book, mentions Hopkins on Tennyson as "Tennysonian," a poet who spoke the "Parnassian language of verse which is not in the highest sense poetry." But he does not get rid of the accusation.

Tennyson, facing language, is too much the sculptor who can sketch only in soft semi-liquid materials, which are easily managed. If he had a "unique and unerring feeling for the sound of words," he had no certainty of their consonantal wiriness or of their entire nature and possibility.

Also because Tennyson approaches total nature (language included), because he illustrates with it, he is most often the liquid poet of Then, instead of the hard poet of a recurrent Now: he is the (very) "minor Virgil" who is time-conscious—see Eliot again. Nature in art needs to be timelessness (compare the best of Yeats and the best of Pound: and didn't Wyndham Lewis talk about "time-bound Ezra"?). If he does go echoing nature, reflecting it, approaching it, illustrating with it, or reiterating "like" in one way or another, the artist may limit himself to time and transience and sadness. Tennyson (and some of these commentators) should have read Coleridge's *Dejection* more attentively and more frequently.

In this book, in seventeen essays, the poems by Tennyson hardly if at all mentioned and never discussed include, I notice, *The Progress of Spring, Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal, Come Down, O Maid, The Splendour Falls on Castle Walls, St. Agnes Eve, Come Not When I Am Dead, Ask Me No More, The Daisy, Frater Ave Atque Vale*, and *Roman Virgil*.

I also observe that the one literate essay out of the seventeen—the *fons et origo* and the only one so much more than slightly acquainted with the character and genetics of poetry, the only one (with the single exception of the piece by Cleanth Brooks) which is a direct affair of critic to poet, without pedantic calls on this authority and that authority, is also the only essay by a poet, and not by a teacher-critic. Every period soon buries all but one or two of its critics, as well as its poets. But every book of this neo-academic kind insists again that our period is going to require a critical cemetery or a critics' burial corner of quite uncommon extent.

Geoffrey Grigson

THE REVOLT IN TIBET

FRANK MORAES

"This is an important book for all people in the free world. It should be read closely by the Atlantic community. It should be translated into the languages of India and of Southeast Asia and widely distributed there. Vietnam, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Burma, and all countries that border Red China should make this book required reading for officials. The Japanese should read it. The importance of this book by the well-known Indian editor, Frank Moraes, exceeds its central theme, which is the story of Chinese Communist cruelty in Tibet. For this volume shows how Red China's dreams of expansion endanger all of South and Southeast Asia." *The New York Times Book Review.* Paperbound 10/6, clothbound 27/6. *From all booksellers.*

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LETTERS

North Atlantic Left

READING Denis Brogan's generous and illuminating commentary on my memorandum about political prospects in the United States [ENCOUNTER, January] prompts me to one or two further thoughts concerning the apparent decline—or at least stagnation—of the Left in America and Britain.

In the first place, no one should forget that this condition, far from being a consequence of the failure of the Left, is rather a tribute to its success. What the Left has done over the last two generations has been to use government to force capitalism to do what both classical capitalists and Marxian socialists had said was impossible: control the trade cycle and bring about a redistribution of wealth in favour of the lower classes. *Laissez-faire* ideology denied the capitalist state any positive rôle at all; Marx said that the capitalist state could be nothing more than the executive committee of the master class. The British and American Left have shown, to the contrary, that in a free democracy the state may become precisely the means by which the lower classes restrain the power and the greed of the capitalists—and thereby save capitalism. The champions of the affirmative state, in their determination to render revolution unnecessary, had to fight the business community every step along the way; nonetheless, the Left persevered in both Britain and America. It exploded the ideology of *laissez-faire*; it drowned the revolutionary dynamism of the masses in a torrent of consumer goods; it subdued the trade cycle; it brought into being the "affluent society." The revolutionary fires within capitalism were lit in the 19th century by the great industrialists and their political servants; they were put out in the 20th century by Lloyd George and Clement Attlee, by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Thus far the experience of the Left in Britain and America had important similarities. But, *laissez-faire* having been demolished, British socialists and American liberals differed sharply over what to put in its place. The British Labour Party was by origin a millennial party. Its heart was with the religious millenarianism of the non-conformist tradition; its head was dazzled by the secular millenarianism of Marxism; and the combination gave Labour a profound sentimental faith that at some point in history the great turning would at last be made, profane struggle would come to an end, and England would become beyond recall, a green and happy land. The American Democratic Party, on the other hand, was, so to speak, manichean rather than millennial. It had no sense of messianic mission, was pragmatic and empirical in its methods, and supposed group conflict to be the eternal law of free society. The British socialists thus proposed to replace the ideology of *laissez-faire* by the equally dogmatic ideology of socialism; the American Democrats wanted to replace it, not by another ideology, but rather by a set of attitudes towards government, deriving from a faith in the clash of ideas and the *ad hoc* application to social questions of intelligence, experiment, and compassion.

Now in practice, of course, British socialism has not been all that dogmatic or prophetic. When it has had the responsibility of power, it has behaved in a generally pragmatic way. Yet the millennial legacy remains; it seems to assume a disproportionate importance when Labour is out of power; and it has brought about a recurring struggle between the messianic and empirical wings of British socialism. The commitment to millennial ideology is the Labour Party's Old Man of the Sea from which it makes periodic attempts to escape.

The Democratic party is spared this burden in any major form. I cannot help thinking that, as a consequence, American progressivism is better adapted to deal with the politics of economic abundance. As one examines the history of industrial society, one can safely conclude, I think, that ideology has almost always misled its adherents. Industrial society is determined by science and technology which means that it is involved in restless and perpetual change; as a consequence, it always outstrips and outwits the ideologists. Classical socialism is as dead to-day as classical capitalism: both were products of the 19th century, and their day is over.

Still, because social ideology may be irrelevant, it does not follow that social idealism is dead, that reform is finished, that Western progressivism has lost all moral and intellectual vitality. But the Left will perhaps never recover strength and relevance until it abandons the delusion of once-and-for-all solutions of social problems. José Figueres, the former President of Costa Rica and one of the great liberals (in the American sense) of the Western hemisphere, calls his *finca* in the Costa Rican hills *"La Lucha San Fin"*—the struggle without end. This, I believe, states the essence of the progressive hope—this rather than the notion that the day will come when all conflict will pass, when Satan will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and mankind will behold a new heaven and a new earth.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

I AGREE with everything that Arthur Schlesinger says, but there are two more reasons why the United States escaped the temptation of a "Labour Party" or missed its opportunity, depending on how you look at it.

First of all, "Socialism," in America, always came in an alien dress. Literally, the Socialists didn't speak the same language as other Americans. They were very largely first-generation immigrants who wrote and thought in German, Yiddish, Russian, Italian, etc., etc. They also saw America in ideological terms arising from their European back-

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ground. Thus in 1919, many of the founders of what became the American Communist Party not only talked of "workers and peasants," but believed that they saw them all around.

But there was more than estrangement to account for the failure of "Socialist" and "Progressive" parties. There were and are the great obstacles American law and practice puts in the way of any "third party." The argument that "you are throwing away your vote" which was first of all used in Britain against the nascent Labour Party and then against the declining Liberal Party, was far more effective in America. The obstacle was often turned, by infiltration *via* primaries or by referendums, but you can't built a doctrinaire party on victories in primaries or pass an amendment (which will be more than a pious opinion) in favour of the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. What would have happened if, *per impossibile*, the Democrats had been in office in 1929, had had to take the rap for the crash, and so had not been available to salvage capitalism in 1933, is anybody's guess. There *might* have been an effective Left-wing party. I don't know.

D. W. Brogan

Peterhouse,
Cambridge

"The Dour Man"

Mr. Graves' patronising dismissal of Menander and the *Dyskolos* in the September Encounter cannot go by unchallenged. I could hardly believe we had both read the same play.

He gives us a misleading historical introduction. He quotes from a version which he does not seem to realise is translated (plus many blunders) from the French of Professor Martin. He then informs us that the speaker of the prologue, Pan, is a "'throw-away' character," who tells us nothing that could not have been developed by later dialogue, although "his worshippers, the chorus, choose his grotto for their outing."

On the contrary, the whole play centres around Pan and the events take place as a result of his power. His most significant statement in the prologue is "*I* sent him violently in love with her." There is also another sentence in the prologue, conveniently left out by Mr. Graves:

> "She (Knemon's daughter) takes great care to flatter and honour my companions the nymphs and has induced us to take some care of her."

True, we never see him again, but the sacrifice at his shrine (which incidentally has nothing to do with the chorus) and his warning dream to the squire's wife are as essential to the play as is Knemon's punishment for refusing to come to his sacrifice. Of course we cannot help missing the point if we look on Greek sacrifices as vicarage picnics.

There follows in Mr. Graves' review a sypnopsis of the plot amazing for its inaccuracies and its distortion of fact. There is no "letter." The "pitchfork" is a pearstake. The squire's son does not "embrace" Myrrhine (which is probably the name of Knemon's wife, not of his daughter), he merely looks at her. Knemon refuses to speak to the squire's son, let alone marry him to his daughter, and merely resigns the management of his estate to his step-son and rescuer, goes to bed and refuses to come to the sacrifice. His final surrender before he is carried off in triumph is a grudging consent.

"Moral platitudes load the air." It is interesting to note that of the three which Mr. Graves quotes, two are followed by the retort, "Why talk platitudes to me?" and the third, "Self-praise is no recommendation," translated correctly in its context is little more than a "Though I say it who shouldn't." Of course there are what Mr. Graves calls platitudes, but such ordinary observations on everyday life were part of Menander's most prized make-up, and Mr. Graves has only to open his Homer or his Shakespeare to see the like.

Mr. Graves follows this with the extraordinary statement (to anyone who has read the play), "Myrrhine (Knemon's daughter, he means), though necessary to the plot, appears only in the last scene but one, where she remains mute." A closer study of 960 odd lines might have revealed other things! Earlier in the play she comes in crying with a kettle, has a conversation with the squire's son, and is caught with him by a slave. Mr. Graves then attributes this "strange dramatic defect" and the absence of two-sided love-scenes to the repressiveness of the Greek attitude to homosexuality! The more natural explanation is that Greek marriages were arranged between the bridegroom and the parents of the bride. There are two marriages arranged just so in this play, both in the absence of the bride; in one the bride has not apparently been seen at all.

On the whole we may await a more balanced and better informed criticism of Menander and his *Dyskolos*.

Leonard Ingrams

London

Dr. Ingrams is right: I *was* complaining of the dreadful English translation of the *Dyscolos*. Here at least he and I agree.

Yes, I did call Pan a "throw-away" character. Pan announces himself as the principal figure of the drama, and is not seen again even at the final merry-making.

Yes, rustic Greek sacrifices were remarkably like vicarage picnics, though tea had not been imported, nor seed-cake invented, nor even the recipe "to make fresh pears taste like tinned, boil in cheap lemonade-powder." The social pressure to attend was almost as strong in small parishes then as now.

The best Greek pitchforks, as Dr. Ingrams should know, were made of pear stakes. And I assume a letter, since slaves could not be trusted with verbal messages.

Granted, the Dour Man was forced only with difficulty to let his daughter marry, and to attend the picnic, but that did happen in the end.

There must be at least a hundred moral plati-

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tudes in Menander to every one in Homer or Shakespeare; but in the name of Pan, don't let's start counting them!

I confess that I failed to notice the brief appearance of the heroine—Dr. Ingrams is even unsure of her name—in the kettle incident; but he has equally failed to notice that she never addressed a word to the hero on that occasion—only to the audience and to the nymphs.

Dr. Ingrams misrepresents me about the homosexuality question. The Greeks did not mind homosexuality in poetry or private life, but barred it from the stage. And since only boy-actors could play girl-parts, tender heterosexual love-scenes were ruled out, for fear of scandal. So when I write that the hero eventually embraces the heroine, I mean only that this was the off-stage consequence of the drama. On stage, he merely looks at her, as Dr. Ingrams concedes. Of course Greek matches were arranged between the parents; but most girls had other views and a love-drama in which a girl's feelings are not considered in the least, and in which she never once addresses the hero, or confides her preferences to the audience is not good theatre. Me, I prefer *Piramus and Thisbe*, even in Bottom's version, to the *Dyscolos*.

ROBERT GRAVES

Mallorca

Varieties of Communism

I HAVE always wondered whether visits to the Soviet Union really enable Western non-Communist visitors to acquire a better understanding of Soviet foreign policy or even of Communist society. My doubts have been amply confirmed by Professor Schlesinger's article on his recent experiences in the U.S.S.R. (ENCOUNTER, January).

It is easy to understand why Western political commentators wish to gather first-hand impressions in Russia, and it is often interesting to compare their impressions with those of other pundits who have already published the story of their Soviet tour. One notes with disheartening monotony how frequently many of the visitors' impressions and conclusions are practically identical. The strain and frustration of "arguing" with Communist officials as well as the thrill of meeting the odd unorthodox student have already been brilliantly conveyed by people like Desmond Donnelly, M.P., that pioneer of tours behind the Iron Curtain.

That Professor Schlesinger's experiences should lack great originality was to a large extent inevitable, but this is hardly an excuse for some of the unwarranted conclusions which crown his article.

Professor Schlesinger tells us that the great value of a few weeks behind the Iron Curtain is to be reminded "of the treachery of abstractions." Alas, it seems that for every discarded abstraction he has adopted another one.

Thus, Schlesinger tries to persuade us that "normality" can—in time—split the Soviet monolith as ivy can split a block of granite. But why assume that the Soviet Union has ever really been monolithic? Every serious student of international affairs knows that "the monolith" was a relative concept needed to compare the political machine of an efficient totalitarian system with, say, the vacillations of the French Fourth Republic. But could anybody conversant with the fissures caused by the multi-national structure of the Soviet state, and the tensions created by its blatant social inequalities, ever believe in the monolithic character of Soviet society? One could, of course, argue that the Soviet Union may become even less "monolithic" than it is at present but, then, why imply that this tendency will reduce the Soviet threat to the West?

Napoleon's France was certainly less monolithic than Khrushchev's Russia, but that did not weaken its expansionist propensities.

Schlesinger himself reminds us that although we supposed during the war that Nazi Germany was the climax of totalitarian purity we discovered "afterwards" that it was honeycombed with intrigue like a Byzantine court. This is undoubtedly true; as true as that in spite of its ideological impurity Nazi Germany conquered the best part of Europe and inflicted unprecedented suffering on tens of millions. If we are now to be reassured by the inchoate semi-liberal burgeonings in the U.S.S.R. and assume that the threat of Communist expressionism has receded, then we may well be running the risk of being denied another "afterwards" for re-evaluating our mistakes.

Professor Schlesinger also suggests that Mr. Khrushchev, by diminishing tyranny, diminishes at the same time the need for external crisis.

What a simplification!

Making every allowance for the time-honoured excuses of all despots and particularly Stalin's incessant references to "imperialist encirclement," can it be seriously argued that the inherent dynamics of Leninist Communism in international affairs are based entirely or primarily on the need to maintain an external crisis so as to provide a justification for internal political autocracy?

Finally, Professor Schlesinger makes the point that it is wrong "to deal with Khrushchev with the policies developed in the age of Stalin." I suppose that Professor Schlesinger refers here to a general political attitude rather than specific policies. It seems to me that so emphatic a view—coming as it does at the very moment when the "old policies" begin to pay handsome dividends—should be accepted only if based on very definite evidence of a change in Kremlin basic aims and motives. Moreover, it must be proved beyond reasonable doubt that this change in the Soviet Union's long-term policy is now irreversible. Neither Schlesinger nor anybody else in the Western chancelleries possess such evidence, indeed there is considerable evidence to the contrary.

Therefore, the only prudent course which the West can follow is to base its Soviet policy on safe assumptions. In spite of the fact that recently some Western leaders found it expedient to pay lip-service to summitry, the détente and other popular myths, these assumptions remain the cornerstone of NATO's foreign policy. In essence, it is assumed that after the death of Stalin, the Soviet rulers realised

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that the collapse of the non-Communist world as a result of "capitalist contradictions" was not inevitable, and that the atomic balance-of-power made it impossible for the Soviet Union to precipitate the "collapse" by direct or indirect intervention.

Consequently, the Soviet rulers decided to practise a policy of superficial "relaxation of tension" hoping that this might reduce Western defence expenditure. As the NATO forces were to grow weaker every year, Russia was to modernise its colossal conventional forces and overtake the U.S.A. in the field of missiles and nuclear weapons. Should the Kremlin's great design succeed—and there are indications that it is—then according to some experts, by 1964–65 the Soviet Union will be strong enough to impose its policies in Western Europe and the Middle East by sheer intimidation.

On the assumption that these may well be the essential features of a Soviet "master plan" it remains to be seen how such elementary tactics can be best covered up. In this connection nothing could serve the Kremlin better than the belief that an increase in the standard of living in the U.S.S.R. is bound to bring about liberalisation at home and a less bellicose policy abroad.

This non-sequitur (Mr. Peter Wiles has shown in a previous issue of ENCOUNTER how erroneous this view is) "better standard of living—therefore more contented Russians—therefore less aggressive foreign policy" has a well-known corollary, namely that

Kennan

Mr. George Kennan, the American historian and former diplomatist, is one of the most provocative writers on foreign policy that the United States has produced, and at the same time a searching critic of American society. In the March issue of ENCOUNTER, *he combines both rôles, in a discussion with Mr. Melvin Lasky about the future of Western society and its relations with the Soviet Union. The result is illuminating, even fascinating—and in the end, heartening in a way that Mr. Kennan may not have intended. Mr. Kennan believes that the Soviet block is slowly wriggling out of its totalitarian bonds. Soviet historians are still liable to subordinate facts to ideology; but they do so less than they once did. The satellites are still tied to Moscow where foreign relations are concerned, but they are much freer in their handling of internal affairs. In fact, "the goals and trends of Russian Communism lie along the same path as Western liberal-industrialism," while the Soviet Union is beginning to move beyond Communism, the West—or the United States at least—is beginning to realise that it will be forced to move beyond capitalism. The problems of an affluent society cannot be left to chance. The sickness of contemporary America can only be cured by more central direction.*

East and West may meet after all: in the long run, nothing very serious will divide them. Even the one-party state is not as great an obstacle as has been thought. In a waspish passage, Mr. Kennan argues that America also has a one-party system, since the two parties are agreed on doctrine. "Their pronouncements," he says, "form one body of banality and platitude"; and whoever disagrees is condemned to political passivity. Thus, "what divides the two worlds is not a difference in aim. What divides them is fear, timidity, the unsolved problem of western Europe and the unhappy dynamics of a weapons-race so absorbing that both sides tend to forget the issue of its origin."

There is sound sense in much of what Mr. Kennan says. Prophecies of irreconcilable conflict between East and West are beginning to look unnecessary as well as suicidal. Soviet society is becoming more liberal as it becomes more prosperous and more contented. The commissars, to use a phrase of Mr. Arthur Koestler's, have "gone to Capua." In the long run, it may even be true—as Mr. Kennan suggests, at least by implication—that Soviet society and American society will grow alike: they are both supported by the same kind of industrial and technological base. But this, surely, will only be in the very long run. Prophets are always in danger of believing that their prophecies will come true sooner than they do. This seems to be what has happened to Mr. Kennan. His picture of the future may fit the year 2000; but one cannot help fearing that it would be dangerous to act on it in the 1960s. The leaders of the Soviet Union are still dedicated and ruthless men, even if their followers are not. And with all the deficiencies of the American party system, it does at least offer an opportunity to two such diverse men as Vice-President Nixon and Senator Hubert Humphrey to campaign for the presidency, not to speak of the wide range of candidates between. There has been no sign that Marshal Zhukov or Mr. Malenkov have been allowed to contest any primaries. The real danger in Mr. Kennan's argument is that the apparent support it gives to the case for co-existence is in the end damaging. Peaceful relations with the Soviet Union are necessary, because without them the world may destroy itself, not because the Soviet Union is not really a totalitarian, repressive society. We can and should oppose Communism, though we should not fight it militarily unless we have to. There is no need for the West to understand co-existence in a passive sense—any more than Mr. Khrushchev does. Western society is worth defending, and its ideals are worth spreading. In the end, the most compelling reason is that it can produce critics like Mr. Kennan—and allow them to read and write what they like.

EDITORIAL IN THE GUARDIAN, *Feb.* 22

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nothing should be said against a détente because a détente might (in the words of Professor Schlesinger) "give the forces of pluralism and tolerance a chance to dissolve the ideological dogmatism of Soviet society." It is worth noting that this argument has been advanced already some years ago by a distinguished Marxist, Mr. Isaac Deutscher, in his book *Russia After Stalin*. Already, then, Western policy-makers were told that if they were to maintain a firm policy vis-à-vis Russia, they would play straight into the hands of hard-boiled Stalinists. Then came the Hungarian Revolution and with it the temporary realisation that Khrushchev's perfected Communism was even more dangerous than Stalin's. Never was the Soviet régime so abused as it was in 1956, never was the détente more remote, and yet, in spite of it, the "semi-liberal" Khrushchev remained in power and the hard-boiled Stalinists who were still clinging to power were sent into exile!

Even if no master-plan for the advancement of World Communism in the atomic age was in fact evolved after Stalin's death, we must remember that there is such a thing as political indeterminism. In other words, even if Mr. K. started with a genuine desire for a détente, the very fact that so many Western politicians and commentators are shouting from the tops of the roofs that the Soviet wolf has changed into a lamb, may tempt Mr. K. to spring a surprise on the West, as soon as Western unwillingness to foot its defence bills and the state of mind that goes with it, will reduce to utter insignificance its ability to withstand or deter this danger of a military threat.

One renders poor service to the pluralist society which Arthur Schlesinger cherishes so much by minimising the danger.

LIONEL BLOCH

London

Dissent

YOUR readers have recently been treated to some harsh comments about the American socialist quarterly *Dissent*. May I, as one of its editors, remark that the two Americans who have attacked us in ENCOUNTER hardly qualify as dispassionate observers. It is as if Americans were to be enlightened about *Tribune* by Morgan Phillips or *Scrutiny* by Dame Edith Sitwell.

Still, there are attacks and attacks. The one by Daniel Bell in your September issue is at least serious in quality and therefore worthy of discussion, even if one disagrees with it. But I must protest the remarks about *Dissent* by Anatole Shub in your December issue. His nasty compound of malice, innuendo, utter inaccuracy and *ressentiment* cannot be discussed; it can only be characterised as beneath contempt. I find it shocking that ENCOUNTER, which usually tries to be fair even toward intellectual opponents, should harbour this kind of back-alley gossip.

If any of your readers would care to form a judgment of *Dissent* on their own, without the help of ENCOUNTER's American guides and emissaries, a note to our office—509 Fifth Avenue, New York City—will secure them a sample back copy.

IRVING HOWE

Belmont, Mass.

Mr. Howe's letter—all cussin' and fussin', no facts, no issues confronted—is itself a fair sample of *Dissent*'s sham radicalism, which rarely goes beyond the rhetoric of moral superiority. A proper response to my sceptical remarks would be some demonstration that Mr. Howe and his associates (who now include Mr. Bell, though not yet Dame Edith Sitwell) have ever advanced a single serious idea for the reconstruction of American society or any small part of it. When such a demonstration is forthcoming, I shall be delighted to withdraw my remarks. As matters stand now, men like George Kennan, Lewis Mumford, and John Kenneth Galbraith strike me as more genuinely radical in temper.

ANATOLE SHUB

New York

The G.I. in Britain

IN HIS perceptive article on "The American G.I. in Britain" [ENCOUNTER, January], Mr. Clancy Sigal rather implied but might usefully have emphasised a point that is, I feel, important to an understanding of his observations. This is that the men of the United States Air Force (in common with the Army and the Navy) are also insulated to a remarkable degree from nearby civilian communities when they are in the United States. The degree of insulation is not, of course, as great; the sense of uneasiness that many airmen feel because of the foreignness of Britain is real enough. But it changes the perspective to know that much of what Mr. Sigal has said about their lack of contact with the surrounding English is also true at home—that the situation he describes is in considerable part simply an aspect of the gulf between the military, at least our military, and the civilian world generally.

In the United States, the fact that the gulf exists is less noticeable than abroad. One's own citizens in uniform attract no interest by their novelty, and there is little of that feeling, common overseas, of vague guilt on both sides because there *ought*, somehow, to be more contact. But it is striking to me, a civilian on a military post for the first time since my days in uniform during World War II, to see how limited the relationship really is.

This particular post, like most of them, is largely self-contained; there is a PX, a commissary, a golf course and other athletic facilities, several clubs, a theatre, and a chapel. Taking a highly unscientific poll, I have asked a dozen of my uniformed associates whether they know anyone socially in the town that adjoins the post. One knows several couples through the off-post church that he prefers, two know a few people casually through their children's schoolmates (many posts would have their own schools), and one, a bridge enthusiast of

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tournament calibre, has many bridge acquaintances. The others in my samples know no one.

I'm not at all sure that this is necessarily bad. Overseas, of course, there is particular reason to be as unobtrusive as possible. No one can be expected to enjoy having foreign troops stationed on his country's soil, however fully he may recognise that it is a necessary element in the mutual defence. A minimum of contact may be the simplest and easiest way to get along. Even at home, why shouldn't the average military man mix by preference with those who talk his own language and live by the same rules? Being moved every few years or less—living without roots—will tend to make of anyone a somewhat different kind of person. And there is, of course, the fact that the military services naturally tend to attract people of certain types—those, for example, who adapt more readily than most of us to communal life. So long as we are in the unenviable, but logically inescapable, position of having to maintain highly organised, skilled, and mobile striking forces, composed of men who must be prepared to devote many years to mastering the necessary techniques and who must be emotionally able to accept the disciplines required, I suspect that the situation will continue much as at present and that the gulf will remain.

OLIVER L. TROXEL, JR.
U.S. Army War College,
Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

"Lady Chatterley"

MISS Katherine Ann Porter ["A Wreath for the Gamekeeper," [ENCOUNTER, February] makes so many interesting points, both good and bad, that one could easily write a whole book to sort them out. I should very much like to know how Lawrence would have reacted to her contention that:

> . . . obscenity is real, is necessary as expression, a safety valve against the almost intolerable pressures and strains of relationship between men and women, and not only between men and women but between any human being and his unmanageable world.

Dirty words, says Miss Porter, in effect, are *meant* to be dirty and it is wrong-headed and sentimental to try to purify and hallow them. This seems to me an excellent point and I admire her forthrightness in making it. If it really was Lawrence's intention in writing *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to purify the four-letter words, I agree with Miss Porter that he failed and that the attempt was in any case wrong-headed.

Most of Miss Porter's general remarks about pornography and censorship seem very sensible, but when she talks about Lawrence it is clear that she is so completely out of sympathy with him as to be incapable of seeing *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in perspective. She finds the book depressing, when it is in fact lyrical, heroic, and tragic. She sees nothing in it except "the activities of the rutting season between two rather dull people," and is apparently quite obtuse to the brilliant sociological and psychological criticism in the passages dealing with the Chatterley *entourage* of artists and writers and with the surrounding industrial scene. She notes that Lawrence leaves his hero and heroine facing an uncertain future and gives it as her opinion that this future will be a dull and "aimless" one—"lighted now and then by a sexual bout."

How anyone who has read more than a few pages of any book by Lawrence can think that the life of his heroes and heroines could ever be aimless is quite incomprehensible. "Tragedy ought to be a great kick against misery," he wrote in a letter, and all his heroes and heroines certainly know how to kick. Compared to Henry James or Yeats, Miss Porter considers him a "flawed, lesser artist"; but very few artists, and certainly not James or Yeats, have known so well what they were trying to do.

> The essential function of art is moral [he wrote in *Studies in Classic American Literature*]. Not æsthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral.

As a man, Lawrence was certainly flawed, like most other artists; but very few have been so acutely aware of how and why they were flawed.

> I think societal instinct much deeper than sex instinct—and societal repression much more devastating. (*Letters.*)

If *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is not among his best books it is because the specifically sexual preoccupation looms larger in it than the social, psychological, and religious preoccupations with which he always associated it. Lawrence thought that if men lived as they should

> . . . some men would end in artistic utterance, and some wouldn't. But each one would create the work of art, the living man, achieve that piece of supreme art, a man's life. (*Letters.*)

To think of him as a pure artist (whatever that may be) for whom art was the one supreme value is as false as to think of him as a doctrinaire sex reformer for whom sex was an end in itself. First, last, and all the time, his concern was to save from degradation, to redeem or to enhance the quality of human life; and if this makes him appear to some people as a parochial messiah, a sentimental chapel-preacher, etc., it is too bad, of course, but it can't be helped. If he had lived to old age he would certainly not have become "interestingly dirty," to quote Miss Porter's appreciative description of the elderly Yeats. He might have become more equable, but he would certainly never have abandoned his position that "tragedy ought to be a great kick against misery." That is what *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is really about, and if all the four-letter words were blue-pencilled and all the sexy passages given fig leaves it would still be essentially the same book.

RICHARD REES
London

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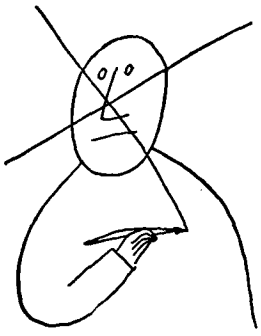
AUTHORS

Saul Steinberg has published several volumes of his drawings: *The Art of Living* and *The Passport* (Hamish Hamilton, London), and they have been reproduced all over the world. But we remember once seeing him challenged on the streets of New York by a small boy who was staring critically at the poster for a Steinberg exhibition: "I can draw as well as that!" "Can you draw a horse?" asked Steinberg. "Sure!" said the boy, and sketched the horse rapidly in the air with his finger, adding, "I can even draw a refrigerator! . . ." and showed how. "Ah!" said Steinberg, "but can you draw a refrigerator with the door open and every shelf fully stacked with tin-cans?" The boy was puzzled. No finger moved. "Oh, but that's something altogether different. . . ."



And once, in Berlin, we were the bewildered one. For a day we had been wandering together through the post-war ruins. Steinberg had just come from Rome and his artist's exhilaration turned sad in Germany. "If we have to have ruins, then in Italian stone and not with these Prussian ingredients of twisted iron and steel which make all this so grotesque, formless, ugly. . . ."

But everywhere, on all the streets, he had seen a special woman's hat, and asked about it. "What hat?" "The one every other *Berlinerin* was wearing!" Nobody had seen anything of it. He drew it on his napkin. No, nobody recognised it. But everybody *must* have seen it, and he drew a few more hats on the table-cloth. We stared at them all, surrounding the spoons and the coffee-cups, until they seemed to begin to take wing and circle about our heads like flying saucers. Had we really seen them? What hats? . . . Ten years later (and another case of life imitating art); everywhere on the Kurfürstendamm one can find *die Berlinerin* wearing Steinberg's hats.

Kenneth Allsop is Literary Editor of the *Daily Mail* and narrator of Granada's TV documentary series, *Searchlight*. His first novel, *Adventure Lit Their Star*, was awarded the 1950 Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize; two years ago he published *The Angry Decade*, a survey of the new writing of the 1950's. He is now at work on "a social-history of the prohibition and gang era in Chicago."

Constantine FitzGibbon *writes*: "Most of my article was originally written as the introduction to the Hoess autobiography which I was commissioned to translate. I had been reluctant to do so; I had found a visit to Auschwitz such a heart-rending and disgusting experience that I was loath to immerse myself in the filth and shame again. But I felt that it was wrong that Auschwitz should be forgotten. My introduction was set up in print together with the rest of the book. . . . At this point the introduction was read by members of the Auschwitz International Committee. This Committee performs a number of functions. It administers the camp site, which is a public monument: it has a charitable rôle, in that it attempts to look after former inmates of the camp: and it is at present engaged in raising subscriptions for a gigantic monument to be built at Auschwitz. It was from this Committee that Messrs. Weidenfeld & Nicolson bought the rights to the Hoess autobiography. Most of its members are Communists—though not all—and its president, a certain Tadeusz Holuj, has a semi-official government job in Poland, in that he decides what shall and what shall not be published in his country. The Committee has no representatives in Great Britain or the United States; nor does it apparently attempt to collect money in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

"The reaction of this Committee to my introduction was immediate. They disapproved of what I had written. Or rather, they disapproved to this extent: they did not dispute my facts, but they maintained that any reference to Russian concentration camps, to the massacre of the Polish officers by the Soviets, and to class-massacres in China was unacceptable. They informed the English publisher (who apparently also controls the American rights) that unless such references were removed, the Polish Government would take an injunction to prevent publication. It then transpired that Messrs. Weidenfeld & Nicolson had bought rights from a body that did not own the property they were selling, which, according to the Auschwitz International Committee, still belonged to the Polish Government. I consulted a firm of solicitors that specialises in matters of copyright, and was informed that it was highly improbable that the Polish Government could, in fact, establish title to Hoess' autobiography. However, Messrs. Weidenfeld & Nicolson stood to suffer a financial loss in the possible event of an injunction being upheld in an English court, and since in any case this book was unlikely to be a best-seller, for sound commercial reasons they preferred, in this case, to shun the publicity of a legal action. I, on the other hand, had no intention of permitting what I wrote to be censored by the agents of a Communist government. I therefore bought back my introduction, and am grateful to the Editors of ENCOUNTER for being allowed to publish it here."

Brian Crozier *writes*: "Have worked twice for *Reuters* (in London, and in Melbourne, Singapore, and Saigon) and twice for the *News Chronicle*; for the *Sydney Morning Herald*; for the *New York Times* and the *Straits Times*, Singapore; and for *The Economist* since 1954. Chatto & Windus is to publish at Easter my new book, *The Rebels: A Study of Post-war Insurrections*."

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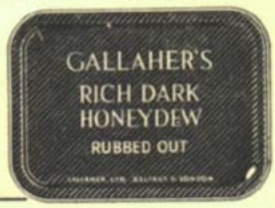

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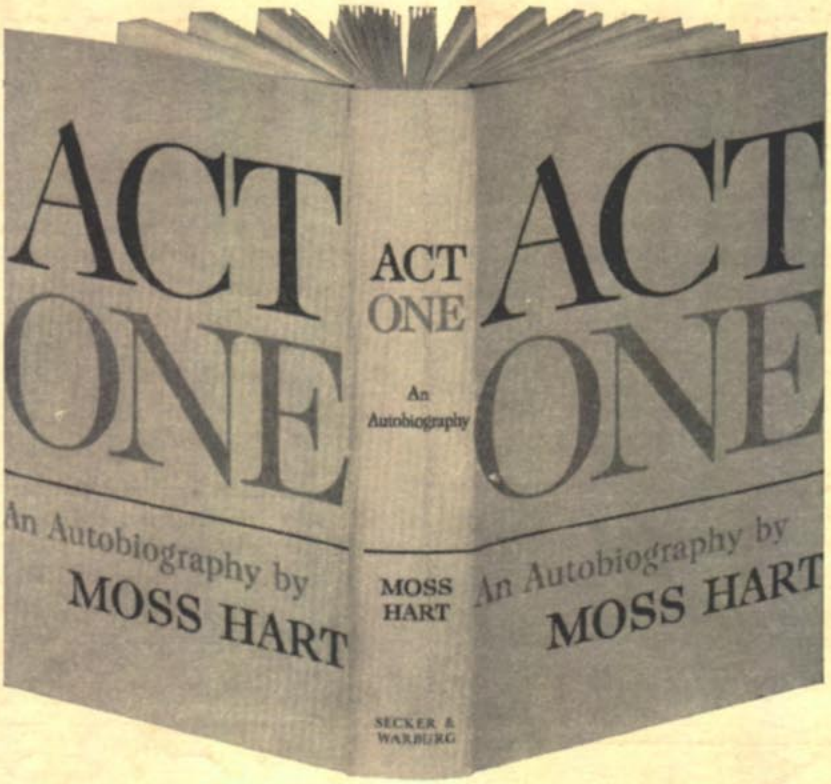

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